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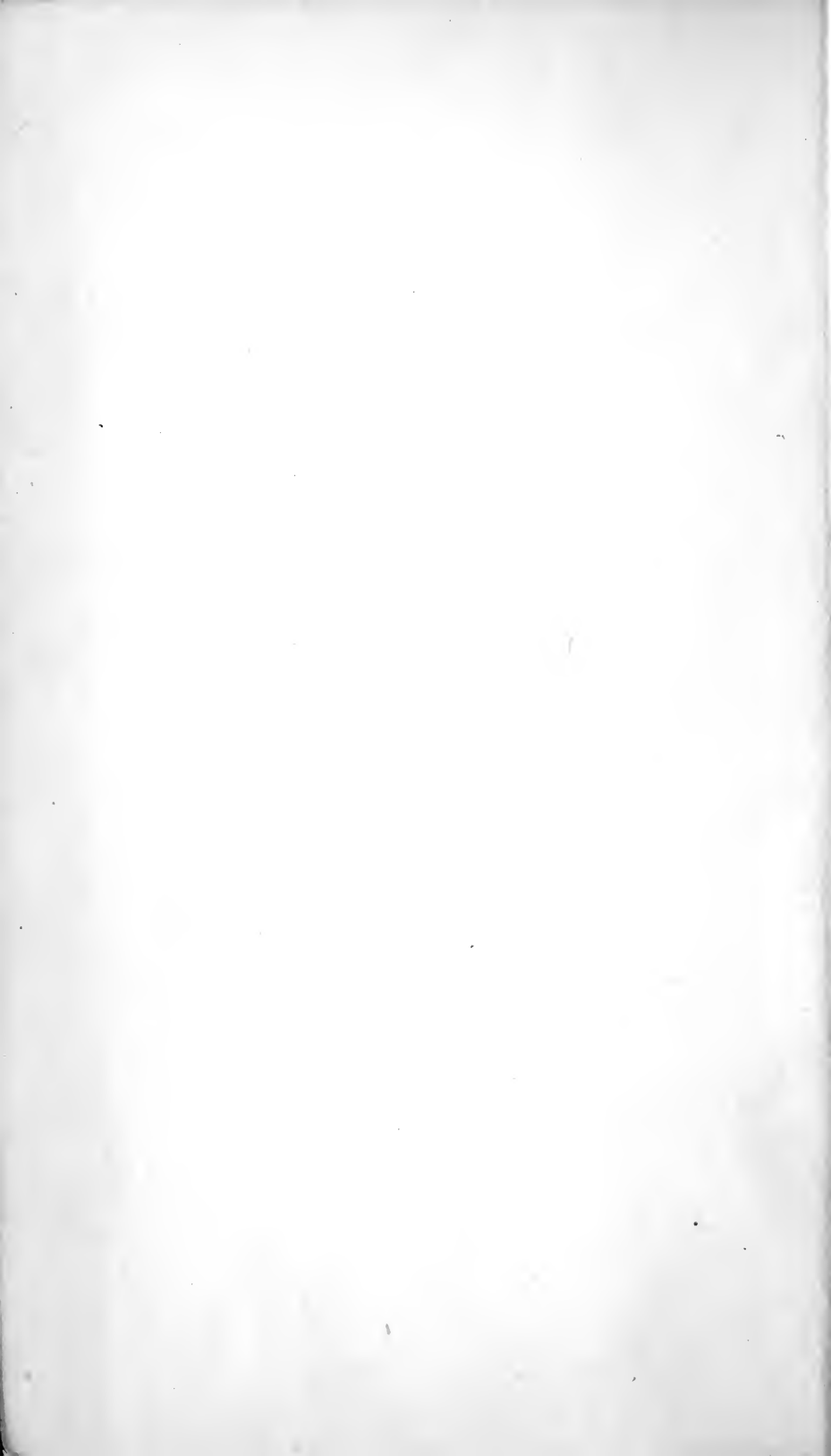
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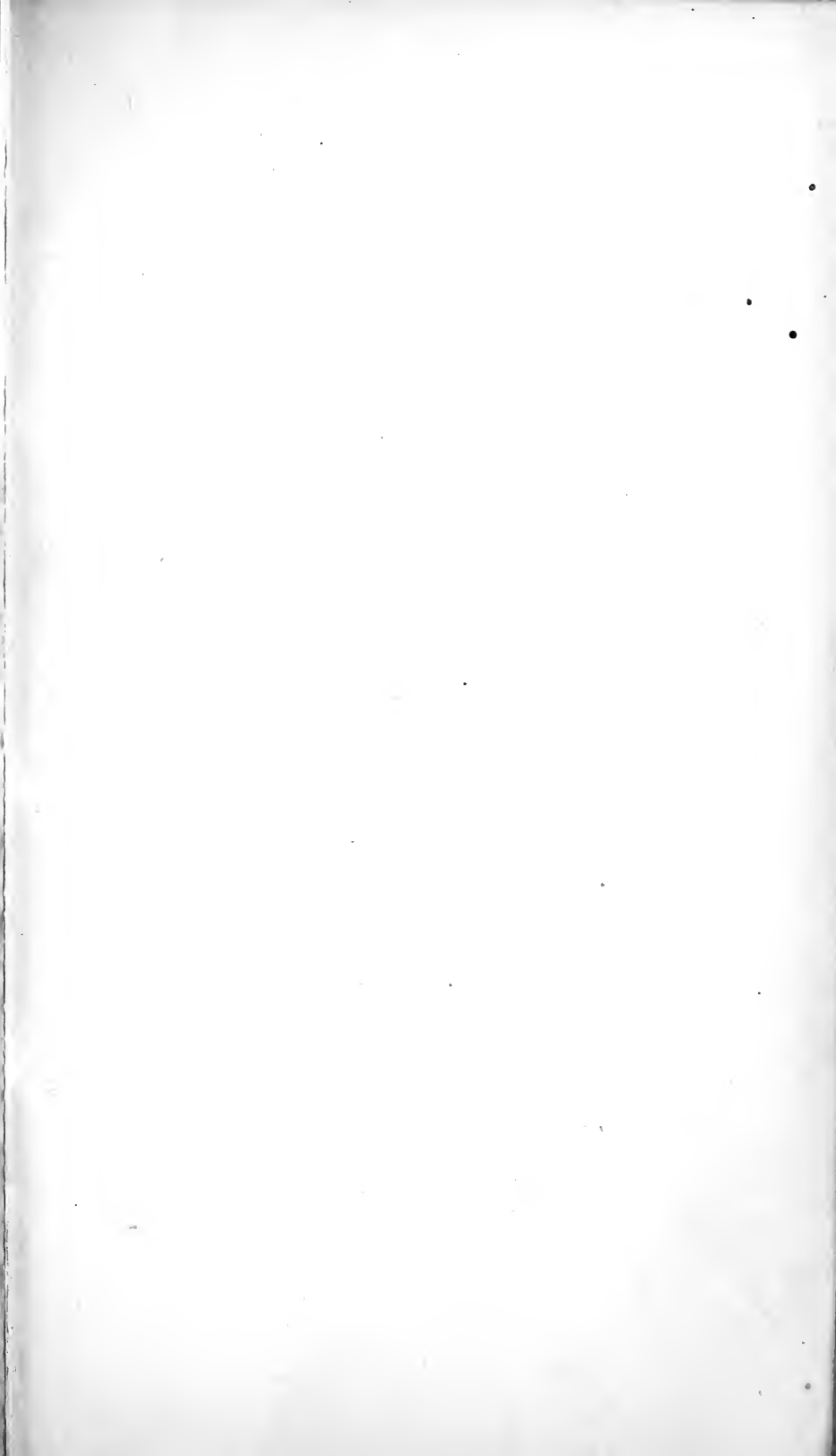
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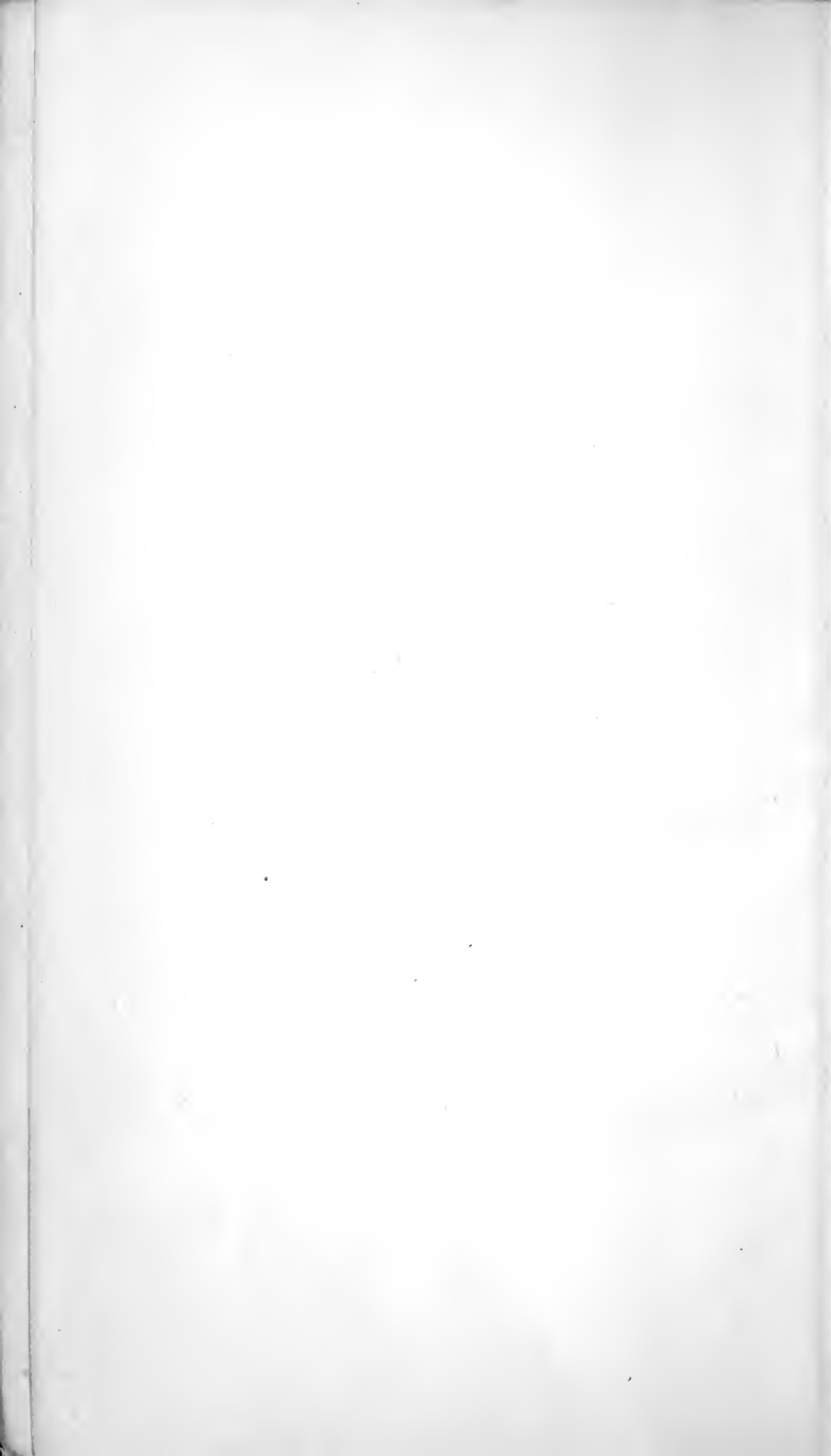
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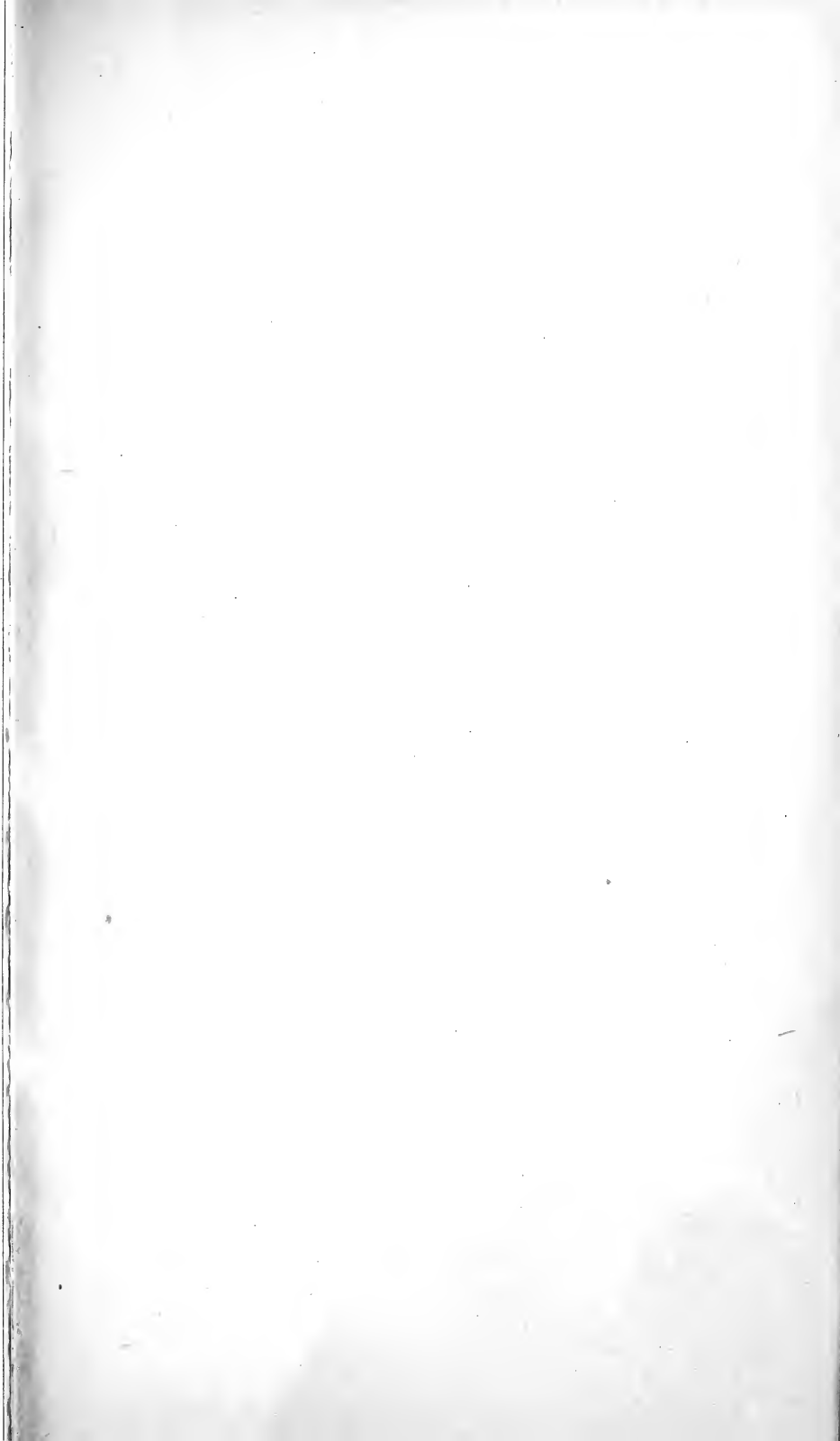
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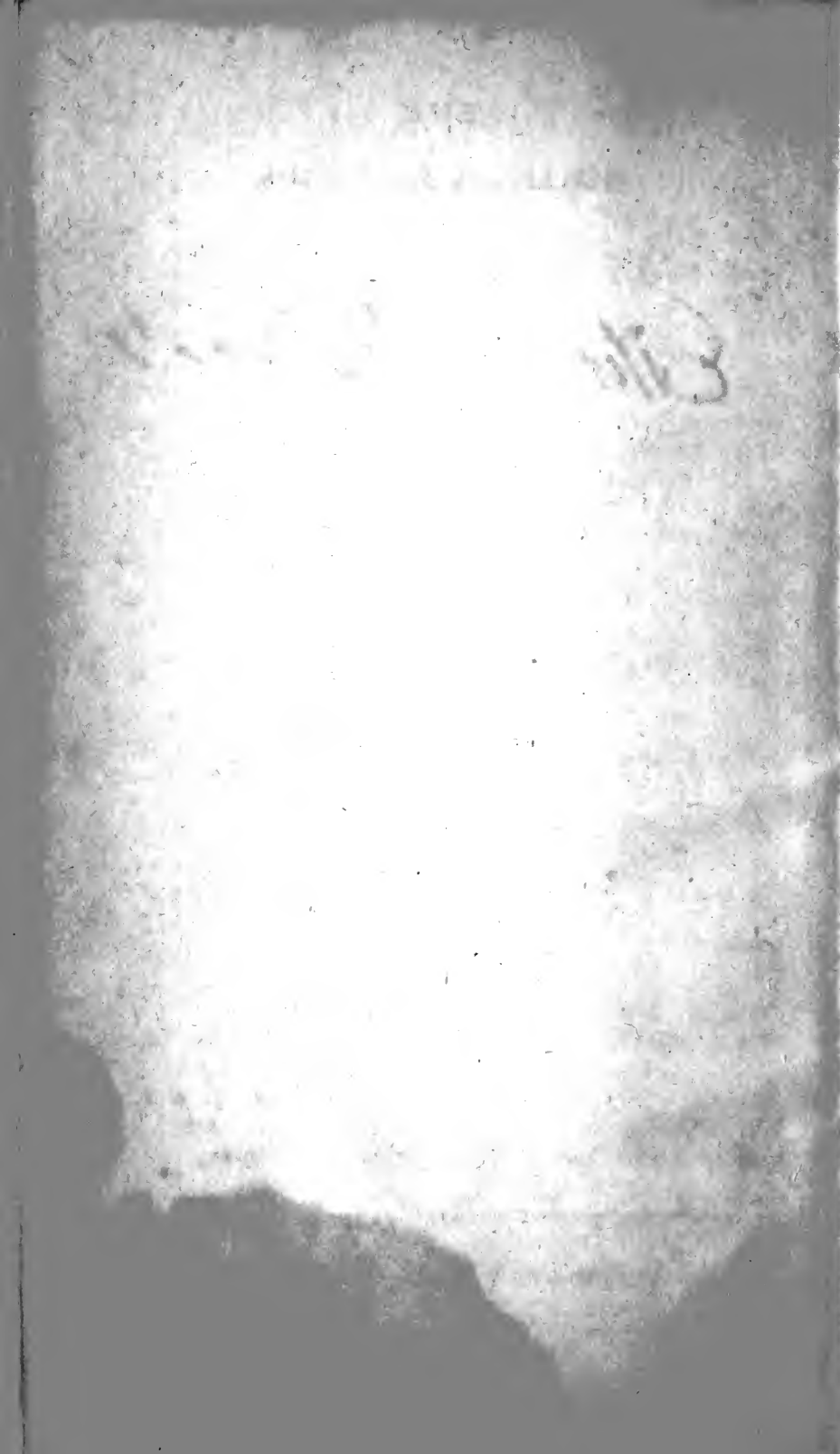












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THE
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS
MISCELLANY;
Extra OR, *Harper's*
SIXTY-ONE

APHORETICAL ESSAYS,
ON SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT
CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES AND VIRTUES.

By *HUGH KNOX*, D. D.
IN ST. CROIX.

IN TWO VOLS.—VOLUME FIRST.

— *hæc ego mecum*
Compressis agito labris, ubi quid datur otii
Illudo chartis.

HOR.

Quicquid precipies, esto brevis, ut cito dicta
Percipiant animi dociles, teneantque fideles. HOR. A. P.

Scribentem juvat ipse favor, minuitque laborem,
Cumque suo crescens pectore fervet opus. OVID.

HARRISBURGH—Printed and sold by JOHN WYETH.
1808.

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THE PREFACE.

THE following little Essays, were drawn up many years ago, partly as helps to moral and divine conference, in a religious society, and partly as the result of such conferences. They are generally the result of free, and pretty enlarged and comprehensive meditations on the subjects they treat of, and consist of such thoughts as occurred first and most obviously to the open mind, in its free and unfettered discursions on said subjects ;...and they were meant merely as hints to start the conversation, and to keep it alive, and to the business in hand, that it might not deviate into wild and impertinent digressions.

This will account for the nature and form of the Essays, which are very singular and uncommon. They consist of a number of loose, general, and often, unconnected aphorisms, or general maxims, commonly closed by some practical corollaries or inferences of the greatest moment.

The primitive design of them, was to convey the most ample, general instruction to the mind on every subject treated of ; yet so, as that instruction might exhaust the subject in miniature, as it were, or, in the narrowest compass consistent with perspicuity ;...and that the method of explaining the subjects should be calculated, as much as possible, for affecting the heart by proper motives, and stirring up men to the diligent practice of the virtues and duties explained. And I hope the judicious and intelligent Christian reader will find, upon an attentive perusal of the Essays themselves, that they are not ill adapted to this purpose ; excepting, perhaps, a few, which are more superficial than the rest.

It had been easy to have filled up the skeletons of doctrine, and lengthened them out to the ordinary size of pulpit discourses. In this form they would have had, doubtless, many advantages which they are now necessarily deprived of : In this form, they would have admitted of connexion, argumentation, illustration, persuasion, pathos and all the graces and beauties of fine composition ; whereas, their present form necessarily precludes these advantages.

But on the other hand, in such a form, they would have been very voluminous and expensive : Few would have purchased them, and perhaps, fewer read them. The present volatile, irreligious taste, nauseates every thing prolix in divinity. Five or six pages of a religious book is as much as we can, in conscience expect, that a modern fine gentleman or lady should read at one sitting. The taste of the times is, therefore, purposely consulted in the shortness of these Essays.

A person of this squeamish disposition, may here read, in eight or ten minutes, some of the most important things which can be said on each of these subjects, without breaking off abruptly, in the midst of the sense, and losing the whole chain of connexion.

Besides, if the Essays are tolerably executed on this plan, the doctrinal aphorisms contained in them, should be so plain and self-evident, as to supercede the necessity of arguments and illustrations ; the practical corollaries should flow spontaneously and consequentially from these aphorisms, and the whole should be demonstratively built upon the scriptures referred to in the margin.

After having humbly recommended these imperfect Essays to the public candor and indulgence, and implored the blessing of GOD upon them, for the general good ; if I might presume to offer my advice to my fellow-creatures concerning the best way of using them,...it would be as follows : That they would read them, in their private and devout retirements, as hints for meditation on these important subjects, laying their minds open, without prejudice, to the influence of divine truth, and earnestly imploring the Father of lights to write these truths and virtues with sun-beams upon their understanding ; convey them warm to their hearts, and make them powerfully operative and influential on all the active powers and faculties of their nature.

I have added the Sermons as some compensation to those who may dis-relish the dryness of many of the Essays.

ESSAY I.

CHAP. I.

Of CONVERSION, *or* REGENERATION.

1. **R**ELIGION being a *character*, must have a *principle*; and this principle must supremely govern and predominate in the life. We do not call a man *generous* and *friendly*, unless generosity and friendship prevail in him above churlishness and unfriendliness, and are fixed principles in his nature.—So it would be equally absurd to call a man *religious*, only because of the performance of a few outward religious duties, while the main of his temper and character is irreligious and immoral. *He* only deserves the character of being *religious*, who is such uniformly and predominantly, and in whom morality and religion is a prevailing and discriminating character!

2. True religion, where it is, must govern the man; and nothing can do this but an *inward principle*. Grace, which is this principle, must oppose corruption, and finally prevail over it.

3. The word of God, and indeed the

nature and reason of things, place religion primarily and radically in the *heart*, and represent it as flowing thence into the life and conversation. The heart, as it is the source and fountain of all external corruption, so it must be of all true religion. The tree must first be made good before its fruit can be good. A bitter or polluted fountain, cannot send forth pure or sweet water. Men gather not grapes of thorns, nor figs of thistles. Good principles are necessarily prerequisite to *morally* or *formally* good actions. Accordingly, the whole stress is laid, in scripture, upon *heart-religion*; or that which is seated and radicated in the heart, and proceeds from pure and right principles and motives there*.

4. As it has been the general opinion of mankind, as well as the voice of scripture, that men are born into this world in a *depraved, corrupt* and *irreligious* state, with strong propensities to vice, and a disinclination to that which appears to be virtuous and good, by the very law of their nature, written on their conscience, and manifested to them by their moral instinctive feelings; so it has been generally thought the peculiar work of the Deity, the God and *Father* of men, to help them, by his grace and Spi-

* Prov. xxiii. 26. Ezek. xxxvi. 26. — xviii. 31. Joel ii. 12, 13. Psal. li. and cxxxix. 1 Sam. xvi. 7. 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. Deut. xiii. 3.

rit, to rise out of this state of depravity and corruption, and to turn to his obedience, favor and enjoyment, in the steep and narrow path of virtue and piety. This has ever been thought a care and work worthy of God the Father of spirits, towards his human offspring; and even a heathen could say, *Nullus vir magnus unquam fuit, sine Divino afflatu.*

5. Revelation represents this change wrought in sinners by God, under the terms *conversion**; *repentance†*; *regeneration‡*; being *born of God||*; *created in Christ Jesus***; having a *new heart††*; a *divine nature‡‡*; *putting off the old man*, and *putting on the new*, and the like|||.

6. Our Lord strongly expresses both the nature and necessity of this change in sinners, by telling them, *That unless they are born again of water, and of the Spirit, and are converted, they not only shall not, but even cannot, enter into the kingdom of heaven***.*

7. Granting these expressions of a new birth by the Spirit, and a becoming new

* Matth. xviii. 3. Acts iii. 19. Ezek. xxviii. 11.

† Isa. lv. 7. Luke xlii. 5.

‡ Titus iii. 5.

|| John i. 13. 1 John v. 18.

** Eph. ii. 10. 2 Cor. v. 17.

†† Ezek. xxxvi. 25—28. Psal. li.

‡‡ Pet. i. 4.

||| Eph. iv. 22, 25.

*** John iii. 3, 5. Matth. xviii. 3. Luke xlii. 5.

creatures, and the like, to be *figurative* and *metaphorical*; yet if these metaphors have any significancy and propriety at all, they must imply the following truths; namely, (1.) That the change of a sinner by conversion or regeneration, must be *exceedingly great*, bearing some analogy to the difference between the circumstances of a child before and after its birth;—or between a being in a state of nonentity, and after the commencement of its existence, in some essential respects at least.—(2.) That it is not a *partial*, but an *universal* change; a change of the whole bent of the heart and drift and direction of the affections.—(3.) That it is not a meer *outward*, *imperfect* change, but one that is *inward*, *essential* and *complete*.—(4.) That it is a change not produced by sinners own natural powers and endeavors, but *wholly supernatural*; the product of a *divine agency*, effected and produced by the Spirit of God: And (5.) That it is a change absolutely necessary in every son and daughter of Adam, in order to their entering into the kingdom of heaven.

(8.) Either these inferences are plainly and clearly deducible from these metaphors; or, otherwise, the metaphors must not only be supposed highly *improper*, but even *pernicious*; tending to mislead the judgments of men, and obscuring a doctrine of great

importance to men's salvation; otherwise plain and obvious in itself, which would be a high imputation on the wisdom and goodness of God; and an unanswerable objection against the revelation of *Christ*.

9. Self-love, a *desire of reputation* and *fame*, and a principle of *terror* and *slavish fear*, often produce a kind of religious character, which is merely outward and greatly imperfect.

10. Although that seed of grace, which is the principle of the spiritual life, is infused *at once* into the whole nature, in the act of regeneration, and gives it a holy taste, bent, turn, tendency and direction; yet the fruits of it shew themselves but *gradually* and *successively*; in the progressive work of sanctification, as occasions, trials and opportunities elicit and draw them forth into act and view.

11. If regeneration, agreeable to the import of the metaphor, be an *instantaneous* act or operation of the holy Spirit upon the soul, producing a radical, essential change in its temper, giving it a new principle of spiritual life, a general divine bent and tendency:—And if sanctification and mortification are only effects of this new and divine principle of life, carrying on a continual conflict and warfare against the corruptions of nature; and a gradually strengthening and confirming the habits of virtue

and holiness ;—then may we very easily and rationally account for an *imperfect christian* going directly to heaven, at death without the necessity of any *intermediate purgatorial* sufferings to fit him for that world of perfect purity. The soul, from the moment of its regeneration, was holy, and was defiled only in consequence of its union with a corrupt bodily nature, with which it was carrying on a continual warfare. In the moment of death, it was released from this corrupt bodily nature, and sprung, immaculate, to its kindred spirits, and its native heaven. The grave is a furnace which will *melt down, purify and refine* this corrupt body, whence it will be raised a glorious, spiritual body, and a fit companion for the glorified spirit.

ESSAY I.

CHAP. II.

The subject continued. *The corrupt, guilty, lost and helpless state of man before conversion.*

1. **T**HE scripture evidence of the wretched state of man *by nature*, is very extensive. Among a vast multitude of scriptures, the following may be consulted; Psal. li. 5. Eph. ii. 1, 3. Job xiv. 4.

Pfal. xiv. 1—3. Jer. xvii. 9. Isa. lxiv. 6. Rom. vii. 14, to the end.

2. Christ is said to have come as a physician to the *sick*, and to seek that which was *lost*. The prodigal is represented as *dead* and *lost*, and his conversion is termed a *coming to himself*, a *being found*, and a *coming again to life*. Conversion is termed a *new birth*, a *new creation*; and sinners, before conversion, are said to be *dead in trespasses and sins*. The unconverted man is said, *not to receive the things of the Spirit of God; they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them*. Conversion is represented as a work of great power; such as God exerted in Christ when he raised him up from the dead.

3. From all these scripture representations we may infer the exceeding *helplessness* of sinners, in an unconverted state. A dead person hath no power to rise. We cannot come to Christ unless the Father draw us. We cannot think a good thought. All our sufficiency is of God, who must work in us both to will and to do; and without Christ we can do nothing. We cannot be converted without the Spirit: but the Spirit is the Father's free gift in Christ. He must open our eyes before we can see, and create us anew in Christ Jesus before we can *spiritually live and act*. Faith is the first grace acted by a converted

christian ; and yet this faith we cannot act of ourselves, *it is the gift of God*. We are naturally corrupt and disinclined to good before our conversion, and *here* lies our helplessness, until God by his quickening Spirit gives life to our souls, and enables us to will and to do, and creates us anew in Christ Jesus to good works.

4. From *reason, observation and experience* we have the following evidences of this truth : (1.) We know good and evil by our natural conscience ; yet we find in ourselves a strong disinclination to the good which we approve, and a prevailing inclination to the evil which we disapprove.—(2.) We know that we are very unlike God, and that we do not cordially love and chuse him and his laws : but God could not form creatures with such a temper : this therefore proves, that we are now degenerated from our first state, and become corrupt creatures.—(3.) If children come into the world such as we may suppose that God first created man, *i. e. holy*, and with a *propensity to good*, or even in a state of indifference to good and evil ; some would surely be virtuous from the womb upwards ; some would surely follow the good principle of their nature, especially as *praise and happiness* lie on that side ; but universal observation and experience prove the

contrary, as well as the word of God*.—(4.) If men were not born corrupt and impotent, a virtuous and religious education would bring all who are blessed with it over to the side of virtue, in spite of evil example: but do we not plainly see that children are backward to imitate good examples, and prone to follow bad ones? They greedily suck in evil advice and the knowledge of wicked things; but it requires much labor to bring them to learn good; they also quickly forget it, and we plainly see that their heart is still corrupt and strongly inclined to vice, in spite of all the antidotes we can instil into their minds against it.—(5.) If we attentively examine our own hearts, lives and experiences but for *one day*, we shall have an overpowering conviction of our dreadful corruption. How readily do we forget God? How averse are our minds to the contemplation of him and his perfections? How little do we think of the love of Christ? We read or hear with unconcern, the amazing story of his love, and feel little or no gratitude for it. Our memories, our thoughts, our meditations, the general bent and tenor of our affections and passions, even our religious duties, and our very best works, may convince us of the wretchedness of our state by nature.

* Psal. liii. 1,—3. Rom. iii 10, &c.

5. We see that a virtuous and christian education cannot, of itself, recover our natures, or remove their corruption.—We see that the study of philosophy and the knowledge of the scriptures, cannot accomplish this.—We see that the most powerful preaching, and best adapted means of grace, cannot effect this great change.—We see men making many vows and resolutions, and laboring hard in the way of outward means, to rise from their corruptions, and yet all prove ineffectual.—We have often, in an unconverted state, been convinced of our guiltiness and danger; we have often resolved to do better, and we have bound *our resolutions* with *solemn vows*:—We have even set a time to begin a better life; but before that time came, our resolutions have proved as the morning cloud. And even when we have attempted to mend our life and conduct, have we not found ourselves so exceeding feeble, as to be unable to effect any thing to purpose? Have we not felt, as it were, a dead weight pulling us backwards, and sinking us down into the bed of sloth, carnal security and inaction? Deplorable but pregnant proofs, and convincing demonstrations, both of our *corruption* and *impotency* by nature!

ESSAY. I.

CHAP. III.

The same subject continued. *Corruption and helplessness, cannot justify sloth in the unconverted sinner.*

1. **T**HOUGH God hath reserved in his own hands the great work of conversion, as his *own proper work*, and we cannot therefore convert ourselves; yet we ought not to say that we can do nothing. God hath given to unconverted sinners a great deal of important work to do, and put it in their power to do it;—hath obliged them by commands, persuaded them by exhortations, awed them by threatenings, engaged them by motives, encouraged them by promises, and given them reason to expect that he will meet with them and convert them in the performance of this work. He hath also laid their help on one who is mighty to save.

2. Altho' unconverted sinners are *spiritually dead*, yet they are not *naturally so*. They have an understanding, a will and a memory: they may know something of their guilt and danger: they may understand something of Christ and his saving design: they may read and hear, think and meditate on God's word; frequent his

house and attend his ordinances. But if finners will not do these things, they will not do what they *may*, and *are able* to do, and therefore are inexcusable.

3. A dispensation of GOD's Spirit attends his gospel, and he hath promised to give his spirit to them that ask him; to *all* that ask him, without limitation or reserve. He hath even made it the duty of finners to ask this Spirit, and to attend diligently on divine ordinances, which are the walks of the Spirit. Now, if finners know that they cannot be converted without this Spirit, and that they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven, unless they are converted; and if, notwithstanding they know this, they do not diligently ask it of GOD, nor attend on those instrumental duties and means of grace, in the use of which this Spirit is dispensed, then they are wholly to blame for continuing unconverted.

4. GOD is following finners with the common influences and operations of his Spirit; striving with them, and seeking admittance into their hearts. Now, if finners would obey and cherish this common operation, and ask the special and converting influences of the Spirit, he has obliged himself by promise to give it them*: But if, on the contrary, they resist and grieve this

* Luke xi. 9,—13. Rev. iii. 20,——xxii. 17.

holy Spirit, which would have sealed them to the day of redemption, they themselves are wholly to blame for continuing unconverted.

5. If the case were even otherwise, and there were but a *bare probability*, or even a *possibility*, that the humble and earnest endeavors of a sinner might meet with acceptance, and be crowned with success, he is wholly inexcuseable and condemnable in neglecting these endeavors.

ESSAY I.

CHAP. IV.

The same Subject continued. *The Duty of unconverted Persons.*

1. **S**UCH ought often and seriously to consider, that it is impossible they should ever go to heaven in their present state. The scriptures expressly preclude them*; and in the very reason and nature of things, they are wholly disqualified both for the *employments* and *enjoyments* of the heavenly state.

2. They should labor to obtain a deep sense of the danger and misery of an uncon-

* Matth. xviii. 3. Luke xiii. 5. John iii. 3, 5. 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10.

verted state : of the evil and guilt of sin, and of the torments to which it will unavoidably expose the unconverted sinner, who dies in his iniquities.

3. They should frequently consider the shortness and uncertainty of the *present life*, which is their *only working day*, their *only period of trial* and preparation for eternity and that death will shortly put an end to all their *hope, help, and endeavors*; and therefore, as they value salvation, they should not delay conversion.

4. They should labor for a deep, convictive sense of their own inability to convert themselves, and that they must perish forever unless God help them, and that speedily.

5. They should endeavor after a thorough and firm persuasion, that there is *hope and help* for them in God, and that they *may* and assuredly *will*, obtain the grace of conversion, if they take the right method, and labor diligently in seeking it. They should set it before them in firm purpose and resolution, as a settled and determined point, that by the help of God, they *will* be converted, and that they will never give over seeking the blessing, in all the appointed means of grace, until they find it; saying with *Jacob*, "I will not let thee go, until thou blest me."

6. They should *actually* and *resolutely*

set about denying all manner of known sin, and every tempting companion and amusement, and attempt the performance of every known duty, as well as they are able, without delay; uncertain how quickly death may cut them off in their sins, and frustrate all purposes of future amendment.

7. All this should be attempted *in the strength of God*, through Christ, assuredly depending *on*, and confiding *in* his help in the way of duty, and perpetually keeping up a deep sense of their own impotence; that all their sufficiency is of God, and that of themselves, they can do nothing; but all things, Christ strengthening them.

8. They should *instantly* and *forthwith* make choice of God, for their portion and blessedness, and attempt to enter into solemn covenant with him through Christ. They should bring themselves back to him as returning prodigals; give *themselves, their interest*, and all their *powers* and *abilities* up to him, as his long abused property, and submit to him in all things,

9. They should attempt *daily* and *perpetually* to accept of Christ, by faith, in all his saving offices, giving up their polluted, diseased souls into his hands as their compassionate Physician and Redeemer; assuredly believing, that he will in no wise cast them out or reject them, and firmly trusting both his power and his grace.

10. If, in the course of these endeavors, the unrenewed heart rises up against these duties, and the *world* and the *devil* tempt the sinner to slight them as *needless*, or to neglect them as *impossible*, or *too severe*, (which will doubtless be often the case) it would be the wisest course for the person thus tempted, to flee instantly to God, by prayer, for succor, and to get the temptation removed. One earnest look unto God, upon such occasions, has been found by experience, to bring more strength into the soul, and to be more efficacious against temptation, than all the human reasoning and resolutions in the world. However, it is the duty of the sinner to oppose the temptation *by all means*, and *with all his might*; and it would be wise, beforehand, to be always expecting such trials, and to be pre-engaging the almighty aid against the hour of temptation.

11. As the unconverted should never neglect *secret prayer*, nor any *one ordinance* which they can attend; so, when the *Spirit* of God moves upon their souls, either in convincing them of sin and misery, or in exciting holy thoughts and good resolutions, they should cherish these motions, and pray God, at the time, to increase and set home these convictions, till they issue in an effectual and saving conversion: For, if they resist, and quench, and grieve the ho-

ly Spirit, he will leave them, and they are in danger of being undone for ever.

12. To help them in these duties, they should often set apart seasons for more solemn meditation, self-examination and prayer.

ESSAY I.

CHAP. V.

The same subject continued. *Symptoms of an unconverted state.*

1. **W**HATEVER characters the scriptures represent as under an impossibility of entering into the kingdom of heaven, are certainly to be reckoned among the unconverted. Such are *all unbelievers* and *impenitent sinners*;—all habitual fornicators, adulterers, unclean thieves, covetous, drunkards, revilers, extortioners, idolaters, envious, malicious persons, strife-makers, sowers of sedition, and the like*. Yet it should be observed,

2. That in order to pronounce men unconverted, we must suppose them under the dominion of these sins, and to be living customarily and habitually in the practice of them: Which will appear from their

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Gal. v. 19—21. Eph. v. 5, &c. Rev. xxi. 8. Mark xvi. 16.

committing them *freely* and with *delight*; frequently; *pleading* for them; *palliating* and *extenuating* them, and hating to be admonished and reprov'd on account of them.

3. Men who continue wilfully ignorant of their christian duty, and careless about it (which may be known by their undervaluing, despising and neglecting the means of knowledge and of grace) are certainly in no unconverted state. All church-neglecters come under this predicament.

4. Men who are careless of their *hearts* and *thoughts*; and give themselves little trouble about their *hidden sins* and *heart-plagues*, notwithstanding they may be pretty careful and conscientious in the outward part of moral and religious duties, are certainly unconverted: for, where there is true grace, it turns the eye inward to the heart, and the true convert is most watchful against hidden corruptions.

5. Those who neglect the duties of *secret prayer*, *meditation* and *self-examination*, although they may be scrupulously punctual in attending the public ordinances of religion, are certainly unconverted: for, secret duties, more especially *secret prayer*, is the *first*, the *continued*, and the *last* duty of the converted soul.

6. Want of *relish* for *holy actions*, and *religious duties*; a *distaste* to them; a

desire that they were not necessary, and a being pleased with any excuse to get rid of them, are very sure signs of an unconverted state ; more especially, when this dislike for holiness is accompanied with an inordinate desire of, and hankering after worldly enjoyments and sensual pleasures.

7. Men, who upon impartial examination, find that they are no better than they were many years ago, but rather more vicious and depraved, have all the reason in the world to pass an unfavorable judgment on their state : for grace is of a growing nature, and where it is, carries forward the soul progressively to higher attainments in virtue and holiness.

8. Men who have freely indulged vice in their youth, and can remember no time since when they were greatly humbled before God for their youthful lusts ; greatly exercised about deliverance from their guilt and dominion, and made to abandon them with indignation ; and who are not very sensible of some remarkable change for the better, both in their hearts and lives, may certainly conclude that they are yet in *the gall of bitterness*.

9. A man who is not *rationally assured*, and who does not sometimes *feel*, that he loves God above all things, and that he is ready to part with all things, his most valued interests, his most beloved lusts, and

even life itself, in obedience to his will, and rather than give up his title to him :—He who loves any creature more than GOD—earth more than heaven—his body more than his soul ;—who had rather be rich than good, and prefers the pleasures of this world before GOD's favor and enjoyment, is certainly unconverted.

10. That man, who upon the most deliberate consideration, is not willing to deny himself the most beloved gratifications ; to take up his cross and follow his Redeemer through poverty, contempt, persecution and even martyrdom itself ; who does not cordially accept and embrace him in all his characters, submit to him in all his offices, trust him without reserve, and give up all things *to* him and *for* him ; is certainly still in an unregenerate, unconverted state.

ESSAY I.

CHAP. VI.

The same subject continued. *The unhappy state of the unconverted.*

I. **SUCH** are spiritually dead ; dead in trespasses and sins ; dead to GOD, and to every good purpose*.

* Eph. ii. 1. & Tim. v. 6.

2. Such are *slaves*; *slaves* to *satan*, who rules in the hearts of the children of disobedience; blinds their eyes that they cannot discern the truth, and leads them captive at his pleasure;—*slaves* also to their unruly appetites and tyrannizing lust.*

3. Such are children of wrath, and, if conversion prevent it not, born heirs to that torment, which is the certain effects of this wrath †: They are stiled in scripture *the children of the devil*, bearing his image, possessing his spirit and temper; and consequently, heirs of that hell, which was prepared for the *devil* and his angels, which is their proper inheritance ‡.

4. The unconverted are enemies to God by wicked works; full of natural antipathy and enmity against his being, nature, will and laws. The principle which prevails in their hearts, would naturally lead them to dethrone and destroy the blessed God, if they had the power.—And being such, God is a consuming fire to them: His nature and all his laws are against them, and so are also all his perfections, except his mercy, which indeed waits a while to be gracious; but, being abused and slighted, will in the end aggravate their guilt and misery.

* 2 Tim. ii. 26. Tit. iii. 3. Rom. vi. 17.

† Eph. ii. 3.

‡ John viii. 41, 42, 44. Matth. xxv. 41.

5. Such continue under the guilt of all the sins they ever have committed. Every law and threatening in the Bible is against them: They are condemned already; sentence is already passed against them in numberless places; so that nothing but the slender and precarious thread of present life suspends the execution.

6. They are on the very brink of perdition, momentarily in danger of dropping into a place and state of endless misery. Every night they lie down, there is even something more than a possibility, that before the morning's light, they may lift up their eyes, being in torments.

They have no covenant right or title to any mercy they enjoy. Every blessing they enjoy has the nature of a *curse* to them, in the manner in which they receive and use it. This earth is only their prison, where they are for a short time, supported by God, 'till the time of their execution comes. *The wicked is reserved to the day of destruction; they shall be brought forth to the day of wrath**.

8. If they were perfectly known, their case would be pitied, and their nature hated, by every good person on earth. And the angels and other holy spirits, so far as they know them, do thus regard them.

*Job xxi. 30.

9. If such did thoroughly know their own wretched and perilous condition, they could not possibly enjoy one moment's peace, tranquillity or happiness in this life. And, indeed, whatever of this kind they do enjoy, is only a fatal delusory happiness, founded on *false hopes* ; producing a *destructive security*, and issuing in *endless despair*.

10. There is only left for them this comfort, that they are yet out of a place of torment, and that there is still hope and help for them in God, through Christ. if they will speedily embrace the opportunity. The *present moment* is all they can rationally rely upon, in which to better their state, and cast the die for eternity !

ESSAY I.

CHAP. VII.

The same subject continued. *Mistakes about conversion rectified.*

1. **I**T has been already observed, that conversion is a *thorough and remarkable* change ; and therefore, that those persons must be deceived, who imagine themselves to have been truly converted, merely because of some *outward, partial, and incomplete* change which they may have undergone,

either from difference in age and circumstances in life ; alterations in their health, constitution, or interests and connexions ; the principles of self-love, honor and reputation ; legal pannels and terrors, or from false and incomplete views of religion. It may now be observed *negatively*,

(1.) That *christian baptism* cannot be that conversion or regeneration, to which the promise of heaven is annexed : for we are expressly told, that unless a man is born again of the *Spirit*, as well as of *water*, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Besides, many baptized persons, are amongst the wickedest of men and have evident and absolute need of spiritual regeneration.

(2.) The *bare profession*, even of a *true religion*, however specious, is not conversion ; else all the professors of a true religion would be *true converts* ; which we know is far from being the case in fact. Much less,

(3.) Can it consist in a man's changing his religious profession : for this may be, and often is done from *worldly, interested, lucrative motives*, and *false, erroneous principles*, and not from convictions of truth and duty.

(4.) Strong convictions of sin, and great fear of God's wrath, cannot, of themselves, prove a sinner to be truly converted. If so, we must conclude, that *Cain, Herod,*

Pilate, Simon Magus and Judas Iscariot, were true converts, which is not true in fact ; because the terrors of these unhappy men did not issue in true repentance.

(5.) An *external sober, moral conduct*, a life free from the gross outward acts of sin, and a regular attendance on the ordinances of religion, are no certain evidences of conversion, though they may justly command the respect and esteem of our fellow men. This was the righteousness of the *Pharisees* : it is also the righteousness of most hypocrites and formalists : and yet our Saviour, who knew and detected the real characters of these men, has assured us, that unless *our righteousness shall exceed theirs*, we shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of GOD*.

(6.) A man's really renouncing and abandoning some sin or sins, to which he has been addicted, cannot prove him a true convert, while he continues in the love and practice of other sins. *Herod* heard *John Baptist* gladly, and did many things in obedience to his ministry, which were not much against his natural inclination ; but would by no means part with his beloved lust his darling *Herodias* †. Men do many things of this kind from meer prudential motives, and because these sins

* Matth. v. 20.

† Mark vi. 20, 23.

are destructive of their health, interest and reputation : But he who offends *wilfully, allowedly* and *perseveringly* in one point, is guilty of the whole law* ; and plainly shews that he despises the authority by which it is enjoined, and obedience to it enforced.

(7.) A man's shewing remarkable zeal in religion, is no certain proof that he is a true convert, or a real christian. Zeal is either *good* or *bad*, according to the *objects* about which it is employed, the *motives* from which it originates, and the *spirit* and *temper* with which it is exercised. If zeal be *according to knowledge*, it can hardly exceed in the measure of it ; for it is always good to be zealously affected in a good thing† : But a *blind, ignorant* and *misguided* zeal, is the most furious, mischievous and destructive of all the passions. The apostles knew not what manner of spirit they were of, when in a paroxysm of their frantic zeal, they called for fire from heaven to destroy the *Samaritans*‡. As touching zeal, *St. Paul*, when *Saul*, persecuted the church of Christ, and destroyed that which he should have built up.¶

2. It has been already said, *positively*, and I here repeat it, That conversion is a

* James ii. 10.

† Gal. vi. 18.

‡ Luke ix. 35.

¶ Read Acts ix. Gal, i. 13. &c. Phil. iii. 5, 6.

great, universal, radical change of the soul by the regenerating influences of the Spirit of God,—not of the *substance* and *nature* of the soul; but of its *temper* and *principles*; not such as to preclude all sin and corruption in this life; but such as causes piety and virtue to predominate in the character, and as it lays a foundation for *progress in holiness*, and *final perfection*. It is, in short, a *new and divine nature* and *principle*, generating a *new and divine life*.

3. The *forerunners* and *concomitant attendants* of this change, are generally, as follows: (1.) This change is preceded by such a conviction of guilt and pollution, as deeply humbles the soul before God, and make it feel itself exposed to eternal misery; that it is *helpless* and *lying at undeserved mercy*, and that it *must perish*, if it receives not *this mercy*.—(2.) By such a sense of the evil of sin, as causes the soul to abhor it, and to wish above all things to be freed from its dominion and pollution.—(3.) By such a sense of the depravity and badness of the sinner's heart, as makes him see the necessity of its being changed by divine grace, and makes him wish, above all things to be truly regenerated.—(4.) By such a sense of the sinner's inability to change his own heart and affections, as makes him feel that it never can be done, unless God is pleased to take the work

wholly into his own hands.—(5.) By such a sense of the sinner's *need of Christ*, as makes him see his help in him alone, so as earnestly to desire to embrace him; to be united to him, and found in him:—And *finally*, by such a sight and sense of the power and grace of Christ, his all-sufficiency to save unto the uttermost, and his fulness and suitableness to all the sinner's wants and desires, as engages the sinner, as a *lost, sinful, perishing* creature, to cast himself cheerfully into the hands of this glorious, compassionate Redeemer, with a full and unshaken confidence, that he will work the great salvation *in him and for him*, and give him a complete victory over every enemy.

ESSAY I.

CHAP. VIII.

The same subject continued. *The way of discerning true Conversion by its effects and consequences.*

1. **A**S soon as the Spirit of God regenerates the soul, it is conscious of a *kind and degree of light and knowledge* which it had not before, and is possessed with *correspondent affections*. It knows *itself* in a different manner from what it formerly did. Unconverted men do little

study and little know their *inward man*. Their thoughts and observations are chiefly employed about *outward circumstances* and *external accomplishments* : But the light of grace opens a new scene to the soul, the eye of which is turned *inward, backward and forward* ; and as light increases, it still sees more and more of its natural *deformity, vileness and guiltiness*, and more and more admires that *wonderful mercy*, which regarded it in its low condition, and undertook its redemption and deliverance.

2. The converted soul knows and sees God in quite a different manner from what was usual. A *new and glorious* light shines now on all his *perfections, providences, laws and works*. In its unrenewed state, it had indeed a speculative knowledge of God, which struck it at times, with wonder and admiration : But now God appears incomparably glorious and amiable ; a fit object of the soul's love and choice, and its desirable portion. Formerly, it could observe his wondrous works and adorable providences, without considering God in them : But now the whole world seems full of God ; God appears more or less to the soul in every work, in every providence in every mercy, and in every affliction : and the soul sees and approves his *glory and beauty, his power and wisdom, his justice and*

goodness in all ; is charmed with these manifestations of him, and follows hard after him as its *only* and *all-sufficient* portion.

3. The converted soul has quite a new kind of knowledge and apprehension of *Christ* to what it formerly had. Unconverted persons, at the very best only consider Christ as a *great* and *worthy* person, and a *benefactor* to a guilty world ; as sustaining a most *heroical* and *benevolent* character, and therefore worthy the admiration and praise of men : But the true convert sees Christ, by faith, as the *chief* among *ten thousand*, and *altogether lovely*. There is a kind of secret unaccountable charm in the very *name*, and *idea* of *Jesus*, that excites his love and draws his affection ; whom having not seen, he loves, and in whom, although now he sees him not, yet believing he exults and rejoices, with a joy unspeakable and full of glory.* He sees an inexpressible beauty in his *person* and *character*, and a wonderful excellency, fitness and necessity in all his *saving offices* ; and, in this view, Christ is exceeding dear and precious to him. He regards him as his *Lord*, his *love*, his *life*, his *friend*, his *wisdom*, *righteousness*, *sanctification* and *redemption*. When you speak of Christ to him, his heart leaps with gratitude and joy, and he is ready to cry out,

* Pet. i. 8.

‘ This is my beloved, and this is my friend,
 ‘ O ye daughters of *Jerusalem* ;—he who
 ‘ hath loved me and washed me from my
 ‘ sins in his own blood ;—he in whom I
 ‘ have believed, and to whom I have com-
 ‘ mitted my soul, against that day ;—my
 ‘ Savior, my Lord, my Judge, and my por-
 ‘ tion !”

4. The real convert has quite a new knowledge and judgment of God’s *holy law*, and quite new regards and affections respecting it. The *Psalmist’s* prayer is now answered in him, “ Lord open thou my eyes, “ that I may behold wondrous things out “ of thy law *.” He, indeed, beholds God’s law with *new eyes*, and regards it with *new affections*. As the very best among unconverted persons have very *false, contracted, unworthy* notions of the divine law ; so neither are they cordial friends to the strictness of its requirements, and that holiness which it enjoins. “ The car- “ nal mind is enmity against God ; for it is “ not subject to the law of God, neither in- “ deed can be : For the law is *spiritual*, “ and can be only relished and delighted in “ by a *renewed, spiritual* mind ; but *such* “ are *carnal, sold under sin†*.” Some of the divine laws, indeed, which do not cross their beloved lusts, may, in some measure,

* Psal cxix. 18.

† Rom. vii. 14—viii. 7.

gain their liking and approbation, and they may be ashamed to speak evil of the law in general, which the reason of man kind and the scriptures of truth pronounce to be *holy, just and good* *. But still their corrupt hearts and natures relucate against the *purity* and *perfection* of the divine law ; and the more they know of its purity, exceeding broadness, and the unabating, unremitting strictness of its requirements, still the more do their hearts rise up against it. Now, converting grace reconciles both the *judgment* and *affections* to the purity of the divine law, both by opening the sinner's eyes to behold the beauty of holiness, and by conforming and attempering his heart to that purity and spirituality which the law requires. “ He delights in the law of God, “ after the inward man ;” he consents that it is *holy, just and good* ; and when his corruptions would lead him to violate its precepts, he wholly condemns himself, and approves that law, which, thro’ the momentary prevalence of corruption, he transgresses †. But that I may be brief,

5. The renewed soul has quite a new knowledge and judgment of *sin*, and his heart stands quite differently affected towards it.

6. The instrumental duties of religion ; *divine ordinances* and *religious duties*, are

* Rom. vii. 12.

† Rom. vii. throughout.

regarded in a quite other manner than usual by the renewed sinner, and performed and frequented on quite different principles, and for quite different ends and purposes; namely, to promote the glory of God, and obtain spiritual communion with him in the use of these means.

7. The *passions* and leading *affections* of the renewed soul, have quite a *new tendency, bent and direction*. His *joys* are quite new, as to their objects; and so are his *desires* and *aversions*, his *cares* and *fears*, his *hopes* and *sorrows*.

8. In a word, a man, after conversion, may be said to be a *new creature*; he has new *principles*, new *ends*, new *purposes* and *pursuits*, new *friends* and *enemies*, new *interests*, new *pains* and *pleasures*, and consequently a *new nature*; according to that very plain and emphatical declaration of the Apostle, *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a NEW CREATURE: OLD things are PASSED AWAY; behold, ALL THINGS are become NEW**.

9. If these things, therefore, be so; if such is the *universal* and *remarkable* change wrought in the sinner by regeneration, is it possible that such a change can have long passed upon men, and yet they be totally ignorant of the matter?

* 2 Cor. v. 17.

10. It may indeed happen, that a few are savingly changed in *infancy* and *childhood* and under the influence of an early Christian education, before vicious habits have been formed and confirmed in the soul. In others also, the (change as to the sensible effects of it) may have been *slow*, *gradual* and almost *imperceptible*; and so, neither the *work* itself, nor the *time* when it was performed, may be discerned or acknowledged, in a course of many years. It may also happen, in some cases, that all the symptoms of a *saving* and *effectual* conversion may be felt, and yet those who feel them, may long doubt of their *truth* and *reality*, and suspect that they are *fallacious* and *counterfeit*; until the Spirit himself shines upon his own work, and compels (as it were) convictive evidence of its truth; "The Spirit witnessing with their spirits*:" However, it is next to impossible, but that all must know, that a *great work has been wrought upon them*, and a *mighty change has passed in them*; and that "whereas they were once blind, now they see†."

11. It may be laid down as a general maxim, to which experience and observation have furnished very few exceptions, that the *greater sinners* men have been, the *deeper* and more *humiliating* have been

* Rom. viii. 16.

† John ix. 25.

their convictions of sin, and the *more sensible* and *remarkable* this great change in them, both to themselves and others.

12. What must we rationally and probably infer concerning persons of this character, who have never yet experienced any such remarkable change in themselves?—Either, that they are total strangers to *self-examination* and *self-knowledge* (which is a sure mark of a graceless state;)—or that *no such change* has ever as yet passed upon them!

13. What then must we necessarily conclude, concerning the state of the generality of nominal Christians?—That they are not converted, nor born again of the Spirit; and consequently, that, in their present condition, they *cannot* enter into the kingdom of heaven*!

ESSAY I.

CHAP. IX.

The same subject continued. *The motives to conversion.*

1. **T**HE conversion of a sinner gives joy in heaven. It gives pleasure to the heart of God, and of his *dear Son*:

* John iii. 5.

and *every benevolent spirit* of that upper world, partakes in the joy, that a co-heir is born to glory*.

2. As far as it is known, it rejoiceth the heart of every good person upon earth. The whole church militant rejoice in it.

3. To bring sinners to *repentance* and *final happiness*, is the chief design of all the manifestations of God to men, and of all his great and memorable transactions on earth.

4. To effect this was the grand design of Christ's *incarnation, ministry, miracles, labors, sufferings*, ascension to glory, and pouring down the gifts and graces of the Holy Ghost, on his apostles and on the church.

5. To accomplish the conversion of human sinners, the apostles of the Lamb *labored, and wrote, and travelled, and suffered, and died*; and this is the grand business of all the labor and expence of a gospel ministry in the world.

6. God's merciful nature invites, allures, and encourages sinners to repentance and conversion. He hath no pleasure in the final misery of sinners, but that they should turn from their way and live.—*This he solemnly swears by his sacred life**. He

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Matth. xxiii. 37. Luke xix. 41, 42

xv. 7, 10, 31.

* Ezek. xxxiii. 11.

is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance*. He is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and of great compassion, pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin†. See this merciful disposition of God to repenting sinners, illustrated with an inexpressible beauty and energy, in the conduct of the *father* towards the *returning prodigal*, Luke xv.

7. GOD's most gracious *calls*, and exceeding many great and precious *promises*, should have an irresistible force to induce us to conversion; especially when considered in conjunction with those riches of his goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering patience, which sinners are despising and abusing, to the unspeakable aggravation of their own guilt and misery ‡.

8. The gates of heaven are set open and all the riches of its beauty and glory displayed before sinners, for this very purpose, that they might be allured by the prospect of celestial glory, to conversion and repentance.

9. We are apt to think the descriptions given in scripture of hell and everlasting misery and torment, very disgusting; but the sole design of *these representations* is to alarm the fears of sinners by the prospect of this misery, that so they may be brought to

* 2 Pet. iii. 9.

† Exod. xxxiv. 6.

‡ Rom. ii. 4, 5.

a speedy and effectual conversion. *Hell* would never have been revealed to sinners, had it not been, that knowing these terrors of the Lord, they might be persuaded to repentance.

10. The *safe* and *happy state* which conversion puts us into, and the *rich* and *glorious privileges* which it confers upon us, even in this life, should be a powerful motive to our getting into this happy state: Pardon, peace and reconciliation with an offended GOD; deliverance from the indwelling power, curse and condemnation of sin, adoption, protection; an interest in GOD as our portion, and the comfortable hope of his eternal enjoyment.

11. GOD's having brought down the terms of his great salvation so low, and made it such a possible, feasible and practicable thing for sinners to be saved, will render them wholly inexcusable, if they continue unconverted, and so come short of salvation. They are commanded and invited, by a solecism in language, to buy the great salvation without money or price, to come and drink of the water of life freely*; only to look unto Christ, from the ends of the earth, and be saved; to come unto him, to receive him, and to believe in him†.

12. Although we cannot fulfil these rea-

* Isa. lv. 1, 2. Rev. xxii. 17.

† Isa. xlv. 22. John i. 12. Matth. ii. 28.

sonable and easy conditions of the new and gracious covenant, by any strength of our own, yet God hath promised, that he will put his spirit into us, and help us, and work in us both to will and to do the things that are pleasing to him, if we *sincerely* and *importunately* solicit this divine agent by prayer*.

13. But the most *cogent* and *necessitating* motive of all is, That we either must *be converted* or must *perish eternally* ! The scripture is *clear, decisive* and *peremptory* in this matter : so that we are under this *dilemma* ; “ We must either *turn or burn* ; “ either *be converted* to God, and born again of the Spirit, or take up our residence forever with devils and damned spirits ! ”

E S S A Y II.

C H A P. I.

JUSTIFICATION : *Or the method of a sinner's being justified before God.*

I. **JUSTIFICATION** no where in scripture signifies a sinner's being *made righteous* ; but it every where signifies his being *esteemed, manifested, or pronounced* righteous.

* Luke ii. 9—14.

2. This word, although it has always this signification, yet it has *three* different senses in the scriptures; either, *first*, it is taken for our *present* justification *in the sight of God*, our being *pardoned*, and accepted into a state of favor and friendship with him :—Or *secondly*, for our justification *before men*, and *our own consciences* :—Or, *thirdly*, for our *public sentence of acquittance and approbation*, on the day of judgment, in the presence of the assembled world*.

3. Justification is a forensic or law-term, opposed to *condemnation*. Now condemnation never signifies the *making of men guilty*, but only *pronouncing them so*; in like manner, justification never signifies making men holy, but only declaring them to be such in the eye of the law.

4. We are said to be justified by the imputation of Christ's righteousness: Now, to *impute*, is to esteem any character or quality to belong to a person as his.

5. A thing may be imputed to a person, which was always his own: So *sin* is imputed to a sinner, when he is treated as an offender; in like manner, *righteousness* is justly imputed to a person, who has always obeyed the law.

* Psal. xxxii. 1, 2 Rom. iii. 22. &c.—iv. 2. &c. Gal. ii. 16.—iii. 1, &c. Jam. ii. 20—26. 1 John iii. 21. Job. xxvii. 6. Matth. xxv. 34.

6. A thing, *quality* or *character* may also be imputed to a person, which was not *always* or *originally* his own, but is only esteemed to belong to him, in the eye of the law : Thus, a debt is imputed to the *surety*, and his payment of it is imputed to the *debtor*, and reckoned *his act and deed*.

7. This seems to be the proper notion of *imputation* in the present doctrine. Christ as our surety, has undertaken to *pay our debts*, i. e. *to atone for our sins*. Our sins are, therefore imputed to him, and accordingly he suffers for them, as though they had been his own : and his righteousness is freely and graciously imputed to us, if we are indeed believers, so that we may plead it before God as *our justifying righteousness* : And therefore it is that God justifies and acquits us as righteous, even for the sake of his dear Son's righteousness, which we accept and plead by faith.

8. As *sinner*s we may be said to owe a *double* or *twofold debt* to God, which must be paid before we can be justified. We owe him *perfect obedience* to the law, through the whole of our lives ; and *this* would indeed justify us, if we were innocent creatures, and did perfectly fulfil this condition of the first covenant : but being now *sinner*s, we owe the debt of *eternal punishment*, and the debt of *perfect obedience* also, (our obligations to which, as the creatures and

subjects of God, can never be cancelled :) Now, we are equally unable to pay *either* of these debts. As the punishment which we owe is *eternal*, we must be *ever* paying it, and never shall have paid off the score. No moment shall arrive in the course of eternal duration, when we shall be able to say, *This debt is paid*. And as to the *other debt of perfect obedience*, the payment of it becomes impossible to those who have *once sinned*; seeing that obedience can never be *perfect*, in which there is *one failure or defect*.

9. Sinners being therefore *thus incapable and insolvent*, Christ undertook for them as their *surety*;—*first*, by suffering, to pay the debt of punishment due for their sins; and *secondly*, by his *perfect and sinless obedience* to the law of God, from his birth to his death, he hath wrought out for them a complete righteousness, answering every demand of the law; and thus he is become **THE LORD THEIR RIGHTEOUSNESS***.

10. The righteousness which is imputed to believers for their justification, is not the *personal* righteousness of Christ, as *man*; nor his *essential* righteousness, as *God*; but his *suretyship* righteousness, as *God-man Mediator*; and is the whole of his *obedience and sufferings*, from his birth to his death, which he performed in the room and stead of believers.

* Jer. xxiii. 6.—xxiii. 16.

11. This imputation, therefore, is God's graciously making over of this perfect suretyship righteousness of Christ to believers, and his accepting their persons, on that account, as righteous.

ESSAY II.

CHAP. II.

The Doctrine of Justification, through the imputed Righteousness of Christ, continued.

1. **I**N the doctrine of justification, by the righteousness of Christ, we are not to apprehend God as mistaking our real characters, and esteeming us perfectly righteous, when indeed we are not: On the contrary, he considers us as being just what we are, *poor, sinful men*, who have fulfilled the demands of his law, only by the obedience of our surety.

2. Nor ought we to esteem ourselves the *more righteous* or *worthy*, on account of our being thus justified, but as unworthy and hell-deserving as ever: Consequently, this doctrine is so far from ministering to spiritual pride, that, when rightly understood, it must tend greatly to humble the justified believer; seeing those who are *thus justified*, are still *ungodly**.

* Rom. iv. 5.

3. The righteousness of Christ is imputed to none but *true believers*; i. e. such as have truly received Christ, and are united to him by faith: For, in thus receiving him, we receive his *person, offices and benefits*, and consequently, *his righteousness*, which is one of those benefits, *freely* offered in the gospel to all who will accept it.

4. This righteousness is not imputed to a sinner before he has faith, nor is the imputation of it delayed till the fruits of faith appear; but the moment a sinner believes, it is imputed to him, and he is justified†.

5. But that this doctrine may appear in a still more *clear, convictive and unexceptionable* point of light:

(1.) It is evident, that man is naturally and necessarily under law to God; and this is equally true of all created beings. (2.) Some kind of righteousness is absolutely necessary to man's justification. (3.) That righteousness which justifies man, must be such as answers to the perfection of that law under which man is. (4.) The law was at first given to man for *two distinct* ends; *first*, To signify God's will, enjoined by his authority for the rule of man's duty; and, *secondly*, As a covenant between God and man, according to which, man was to

† Rom. iv 24, 25.

expect life or death eternal, as he *should* or *should not* fulfil the terms of it. Now, this law, in the *last* sense of it, is abrogated by the bringing in of a *better covenant*; but in the *first* sense, the law, as a *rule of duty*, *obliging to obedience*, is of perpetual obligation. In *this sense*, Christ came to *establish the law*, and has incorporated it into his gospel, in its utmost purity, as the *law of his kingdom*, and the *rule of his subjects*. It is therefore a righteousness answerable to the demands of *this law*, which alone can justify us. But,

(5.) We can have no such righteousness of our own; nor can any creature provide such a righteousness for us; and it is expressly declared by the Apostle, "That by the deeds of the law, no flesh living shall be justified*."

(6.) The law, an obedience to which the Apostle excludes from having any share in our justification, is not merely the *ceremonial law*, as some have imagined, but the *moral law* also:—That law, by which is the *knowledge of sin*†:—That law which was *ordained to life*‡:—That law, by the breach of which the whole world was condemned, and from the curse of which Christ came to deliver us||:—That law against

* Rom. viii. 3.—iii. 20, 28. Gal. ii. 16.—iii. 21.

† Rom. iii. 20.—vii. 7.

‡ Rom. vii. 10.—x. 5.

|| Rom. iii. 19. Gal. iii. 13.

which the Gentiles sinned* ;—and that law which we *established by faith*† ; all which descriptions, are applicable *only* to the *moral law*. *Abraham* is declared to have been justified *by faith alone*, without works done in obedience to *any law*‡ ; and the Apostle expressly excludes *works of every kind* from our justification||.

(7.) No such *NEW LAW of gospel sincerity* (taking in *faith, repentance, and sincere, though imperfect, obedience* as the ground of our justification under the *new covenant*, instead of perfect obedience under *the old*) has ever been given by God, as the term of our pardon and acceptance : For, if we were justified before God by such a *patchwork, imperfect righteousness* as this, two absurdities would follow :—*First*, God must be supposed to abate in the demands of his law, in favor of our corruptions ; and, if God could abate *anything* of the perfection of his law, he might abate *more* ; yea, he might cancel its obligations altogether. In that case, Christ lived and died in vain, who lived and died to *establish and honor* the law ; and mankind might have been redeemed and saved without his *atonement and mediation* :—*Secondly*, We are then still under a cove-

* Rom. iii. 9.

† Rom. iii. 31.

‡ Rom. iv. 2, 3.

|| Eph. ii. 8, 9. Rom. ii. 6.

nant of works, and live by doing: For, let the work be *perfect or imperfect*, it will still be a *covenant of works*, so long as *works* are the *condition of it*! Both of which are expressly contrary to the doctrine of the gospel.

8. We cannot possibly be justified by the *works, or merit, or righteousness* of any *mere creature*, however holy or dignified; none being able to pay more than that righteousness which he himself owes, as a creature to the law of GOD: For creatures are obliged to employ all their powers, talents and faculties in the service of their Creator; and when they have done all that they are commanded, and all that they can, they have done only their duty; and therefore can, properly speaking, merit nothing for other creatures*.

ESSAY II.

CHAP. III.

The Doctrine of Justification continued.

1. **WE** have already observed, that we have no righteousness of our own whereby we can be justified, so that if ever we are justified, it must be by the

* Luke xvii. 9, 10.

righteousness of *another*; and *this other*, as the scriptures declare, is the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who appeared upon earth to fulfil all righteousness; tho' he owed no such righteousness on his own account, as Mediator (this being an office which he voluntarily undertook, and to which he was by no means antecedently obliged): For this purpose also, he was *made of a woman, made under the law; appeared in the likeness of sinful flesh; gave his life a ransom for many, and made his soul an offering for sin.**

As it appears to me a matter of unspeakable importance that mankind should well understand this doctrine, so I take the liberty of entreating the readers of this little Essay, to bestow a close attention to the aphorism advanced in it, and to the scriptures in the margin, upon which these aphorisms are grounded.

2. Christ is expressly called the Lord our righteousness, and we are said to be justified by his righteousness†.

3. This *mediatorial or suretyship righteousness* of Christ, is expressly said to be *made over, or imputed* to believing sinners for their justification‡.

* Gal. iv. 4. Phil. ii. 7, 8. Matth. xx. 28. Heb. ix. 28. Isa. liii.

† Jer. xxiii. 6. Isa. xlv. 24, ——— liii. 11. Dan. ix. 24.

‡ Rom. iii. 24. ——— v. 18, 21. ——— viii. 1, 4. ——— x. 4.

4. Christ wrought out this righteousness for us, by the appointment of God, in consequence of the covenant of redemption*.

5. This righteousness was wrought out in the *same nature* which *sinned and fell*, and which *stood in need of it*: He assumed not the *nature*, nor undertook *the cause* of *fallen angels*, but of the *fallen and lost seed of Adam*, the progenitor of human sinners. So that HE, by assuming *our nature* is become *our kinsman*, to redeem *our lost inheritance*†; and, it is remarkable, that God *prepared him a body* for this very purpose; which proves that the design was originally from God, and that he is well-pleased for his righteousness sake‡.

6. Nothing can be clearer and plainer from the whole current of scripture, than that what Christ *did and suffered in our nature*, as *God-man Mediator*, he *did and suffered properly in our room and stead*, and that both his *obedience and sufferings* were properly *vicarious*, i. e. *for us*, upon our being enabled to comply with, and fulfil the conditions of the covenant of grace; i. e. *believe in such a manner as to repent and return unto God*, by a saving conver-

* Zech. vi. 12, 13. 1 Pet. i. 19, 20. Prov. viii. 22,—31. Heb. x. 5,—10. Isa. xlii. 6—xlix. 3,—9—1. 5,—10.—liii. 10. 2 Tim. i. 9. Tit. i. 2. Gal. i. 4.

† Ruth. iv. 4,—15. Levit. xxv. 24.

‡ Gal. iv. 4. Heb. ii. 14. Psal. xl. 6. Rom. viii. 3:—v. 19.

tion*; and *this alone* can account for the greatness of our Lord's *dejection, consternation, terror and agony* in the last scenes of his passion.

7. God the Father hath declared his acceptance of this righteousness for all the purposes for which it was intended, and in consequence of which, he is declared to be a *just God*, while a *Savior*, and the *justifier of sinners* who believe in Jesus†. He is represented as delighting in Christ, in the very prospect of his *thus offering himself*, and *working out a righteousness* for men‡; and as being actually *delighted and well pleased* with that sacrifice which, in the fulness of time, he offered||. God's *acceptance and approbation* of this righteousness, is also proved by his raising him from the prison of the grave, and receiving him into heaven.**

8. The way in which we become interested in this righteousness, is by *faith*, which will be the subject of the following Essay.

9. As this mediatorial righteousness of Christ is *perfect and complete*, so if it be

* Read and attentively consider Heb. ix. 26,—28. 1 Pet. ii. 24. John. i. 29 Eph. v. 2. Matth. xx. 28—xxvi. 28. 1 Tim. ii. 6. Gal. iii. 13. Rom. iii. 25. 2. Cor. v. 21.

† Rom. iii. 26.

‡ Prov. viii. Isa. xlii. 1. Matth. iii. 17.

|| Eph. v. 2.

** Acts ii. 24. Rom. iv. 25.—viii. 34. Heb. xiii. 20. John xvi. 10.

imputed to a sinner for his justification, it must be every way sufficient for that purpose. It is to the *full satisfaction* of all the parties concerned : For, *first*, as Christ was perfectly holy in his nature, of infinite dignity in his person, and *did* and *suffered* all that the law required, so the demands of the law are fully satisfied, and the law itself *more* honored than it could have been by the perfect obedience of innocent men or angels :—*Secondly*, God himself is *perfectly satisfied*, as the whole design was *from him*, and all his perfections do most illustriously shine out in this way of justifying a sinner* :—It is a method pleasing to Christ; He *freely* offered himself; he *gloriously* revived from under his sufferings, and is *highly exalted* and *rewarded* in consequence of them† ;—Nor, surely, can the *pardoned sinner* himself have any thing to object against this method of his justification. He had no righteousness *of his own*, nor could the whole universe of created beings furnish him with any which could be available : In *this forlorn and destitute condition*, God pitied him and laid his help upon one mighty to save ; and Christ wrought out a most perfect righteousness for his justification.

10. As it is undoubtedly true, that we

* Job xxxiii. 23, 24. † John iv. 10. Acts ii. 23.

‡ Philip. ii. 6, 7.—14.

cannot be justified by any *inherent, personal righteousness* of our own; so it is equally certain, that without *such an inherent righteousness*, wrought in us by the regenerating, sanctifying Spirit, we can never enter into the kingdom of heaven. This is a doctrine of vast importance also, and which is evident from the whole current of scripture*. *Holiness* is that *preparatory qualification*, which is necessary in order to our possessing the inheritance of GOD's saints in glory,—in the same manner as *faith* is necessary in order to obtain an interest in the righteousness of Christ, for the sinner's justification. *Faith* puts us in a state of favor with GOD: *Holiness* qualifies us for his enjoyment. Without *faith* we cannot be justified: Without holiness we cannot be glorified.

ESSAY III.

The NATURE of FAITH in general, and of JUSTIFYING FAITH in particular.

I. **F**AITH is properly an assent of the understanding to the truth of some testimony: It ought always to rest on *sufficient evidence*, and is either *human* or *divine*, according to the testimony which it respects.

* 1 Cor. vi. 9, 10. Heb. xiii. 14, &c. &c.

2. Human faith is an assent to the testimony of *men*, and admits of various degrees, from absolute disbelief, to a firm persuasion.

3. The firmest foundation of human faith, is, when a number of men, of good character and competent judges of the matter which they testify, perfectly agree in their testimony ;—when they lay down their lives in confirmation of it, without any view of interest in propagating a falsehood ;—and when numbers, who are declared enemies to their testimony, yet confess the principal matters of it. On this foundation stands our belief of the truth of Christianity, so far as it is a *matter of fact*, which recommends itself to our understandings by *external evidence*.

4. Divine faith rests on the testimony of that GOD, who can neither *be deceived himself* nor *deceive us* ; and therefore must be *infallibly true*. Wherefore, whenever we come to be assured that GOD hath *revealed* or *declared* any thing or doctrine, we are as certain of its truth, as that GOD liveth ; however *mysterious* or *incomprehensible* the doctrine or matter revealed may appear to our *limited, finite understandings*.

5. Human testimony is, in its own nature, *fallible*, because it is the testimony of a creature, *whose perfections are limited*, and who may possibly be *mistaken, deceived, lie or repent*: Yet human testimony

may, in some cases, be so circumstanced, as to give the *highest degree of moral certainty*.

6. Saving faith begins by receiving, and submitting to the *whole testimony of GOD*, recorded in scripture, as *true, divine, and infallible*.

7. If it be true, that we ought to *have reason* to believe what we do believe; or, that we ought to believe *only upon sufficient evidence*, it will follow, that every believer of Christianity should endeavor to be well acquainted with the evidences of the truth of Christianity, both *external and internal*.

8. This *general faith* of the *truth and divinity* of the holy scriptures, includes in it a *particular faith* of every *particular truth, doctrine, promise, law, or threatening*, contained in these scriptures. Consequently,

9. When we have once paid the *obedience of faith* to the whole word of GOD, and known by the contents of this revelation, *our own guilty, miserable, helpless and perishing state by sin*, and the glorious remedy provided in a Mediator and Redeemer;—his glorious dignity, power, grace, offices and suitableness to our wants and necessities, we then *believe on him* as the *Son of GOD*, and *our Redeemer*. This is *justifying, saving faith*; the faith requir-

ed by Christ and his apostles.

10. Divines have distinguished faith, as it *assents to truth*, or *receives and applies a promise*: The former they call an *act of the understanding*; the latter an *act of the will*: The former they call *assent*; the latter *consent*. But faith in the simple notion of it, seems to be only “an act of the understanding, firmly assenting to saving truth;” Yet,

11. The necessity of the *consent of the will*;—the act of *trust or reliance*, as it is called, or the *application of the promise*, is by no means denied: But this I would rather consider as the *fruit of faith*, than as *faith itself*.

12. Divines have distinguished and explained *historical faith*—*temporary faith*—*faith of miracles*—*faith of devils*, and the like; but as neither of these is the *true gospel faith*, to which the promises are annexed, the consideration of them is here omitted.

13. True and *saving faith* begins in the belief of God, his *providence* and his word, and terminates and fixes on *Christ and his righteousness*, as the *great saving object* therein exhibited.

14. Faith, in the principle of it, is the *gift of God to us*, and a *grace wrought in us* by his holy Spirit*.

* Eph. ii. 8. Col. ii. 12. 2 Thes. i. 11.

15. Faith does not *justify* and *save us* as it is an *act of ours* (for so, it is a *work* and has no merit for this purpose;) but only as it *credits* the testimony of God concerning his Son Jesus Christ, so as to *receive* him in all his offices according to the gospel offer of him; to *unite the soul to him*—and to *embrace, rely upon* and *plead* his righteousness, which justifies.

16. Faith disposing the soul to embrace Christ and his righteousness, this righteousness is graciously imputed by God to the believer for his *justification*; and the Spirit through Christ, is communicated to the believer for his sanctification;—so that Christ dwells in his heart *by, or through* faith; and Christ is made of God, to the believer, both *his righteousness* and his *strength*.

17. That faith which is the *gift of God*, ever *purifies the heart, works by love*, and is the fruitful principle of *holy obedience*.

18. The just *live by faith*. Their whole life is a *life of faith on the Son of God*, in which they daily lean and rely on him, and derive strength from him*.

* John v. 1, — 16.

ESSAY IV.

CHAP. I.

Of entering into COVENANT with GOD.

1. **A** COVENANT is a *stipulation* or *agreement* between *two* or *more* parties, wherein certain terms and conditions are to be fulfilled, and certain benefits received upon their performance. But if any of the parties fail to perform their stipulations they become *covenant-breakers*; the other party is absolved from its obligation, and the covenant becomes *void*.

2. In all covenants between men, there is a *parity* or some kind of *equality* between the parties contracting; and by reason of that natural liberty, which is the inviolable, unalienable privilege of every human creature, with regard to his fellow-men, the *contract stipulation*, or *agreement* must be supposed to be *free* and with *full consent*, and the terms and conditions of the covenant, such as both parties shall mutually consent to. So that the most dignified or powerful mortal, can have no right to force any conditions upon his fellow-men, or bind them to any duties which they do not freely and voluntarily consent to; only upon this proviso, that they have by some crime, *forfeited their natural liberty*.

3. It is the most astonishing act of condescension, that ever God vouchsafed to enter into covenant with man, as *his creature*, and much more, as his *sinful, obnoxious creature*. As his *creature* and *natural subject*, it was sufficient that God gave to man a *law*, with a *penalty*: As a *sinful creature*, and *rebellious subject*, man had no right to expect any thing else but punishment, without any covenant privileges or mercies.

4. God, when he created man a moral agent, did, in the state of his innocence, enter into a covenant with him, the equitable terms of which were, '*Do and live*—*transgress, and die.*' Man had power to keep this covenant of life; but if he transgressed it, there was no provision made in the covenant of *pardon* for transgressors, or of *new strength to obey*.

5. When man had broke the first covenant, and forfeited all title, not only to God's *covenant goodness*, but even to mercy,—(wonderful *grace*!) God was pleased to enter again into covenant with man. And this last covenant is well termed a *covenant of grace*; because it is founded on the *free, undeserved* grace of God, and the merits of the redeemer; and because God's grace and Spirit are stipulated in it, to enable man to rise from his fallen state, and to give him strength to fulfil the conditions of it.

6. GOD being not only the *Maker* and rightful Lord of man, and infinitely *holy just* and *good*; but fallen man having also forfeited his life.—GOD, I say, has a right to propose the covenant to man, and to fix the terms and conditions of it; and it is infinitely right that man entering into covenant with his Maker and Redeemer, should be willing to sign a *charte blanche*. Yet does not GOD force the will of man to consent to his gracious covenant, but only proposes it to him; shews him the equity and advantage of his complying with it, and *gently moves* him to his duty and interests by the motives of his gospel and attractions of his holy Spirit.

7 GOD's freely tendering this covenant to sinners of mankind, is a sufficient warrant and encouragement for our taking hold of it, and entering into covenant with him; which, without this warrant, would seem dreadful presumption in such *creatures* as we are.

8 GOD's part of the covenant is all a *free* and *gracious promise* of something which we *do not*, and *cannot* properly *deserve* or *merit* by any thing we can do;—and our part of it is *all duty*, which we were bound to perform antecedently to any covenant promise:—And even our *ability* to do this duty, and perform these conditions, on which we are entitled to covenant blessings,

is promised and offered in the covenant itself. "I will be their God, and they shall be my people.—I will give grace and glory, and no good thing will I withhold from them that walk uprightly.—I will take away the hard and stony heart, and will give them an heart of flesh.—I will write my law on their heart, and put my fear in their inward part—and I will be their God, and they shall be my people."

9. There is something very singular in all these forms of God's covenant, "*I will, and they shall.*" In all covenants between men, the parties fulfil their own conditions, independently on each other. But God not only *proposes the covenant*, but also *gives strength and ability* to fulfil the conditions on their part;—puts his Spirit into their hearts; writes his law in their inward parts,—and often makes them a *willing people in the day of his power*. The very covenant itself *offers and conveys grace and strength* to fulfil it.

10. Although we are not properly at liberty whether we shall chuse God as our covenant God, or enter into covenant with him, or not;—but are obliged both by *duty* and *interest* to do it, and to do it without hesitation or delay: yet our chusing him, and entering into covenant with him, must be a matter of *cordial and deliberate choice*.

“ Chuse ye this day whom ye will serve. I
 “ beseech you therefore, brethren, by the
 “ mercies of GOD, that you present your
 “ bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable
 “ to GOD, which is your reasonable ser-
 “ vice.”—GOD will have *our heart*; the
 approbation of our reason and the free and
 chearful consent of our mind in this matter,
 —that it may not be a *constrained*, but a
reasonable and willing service. If he con-
 strains any to be thus happy, it is by the
 constraints of his *grace*: making them a
willing people in the day of his power.

11. As sinners, in a natural state, have
 neither a relish for the promises of GOD’s
 covenant, nor a heart and inclination to per-
 form the conditions of it; hence it follows,
 that none but gracious persons *can* or *will*
 enter into covenant with GOD; and that all
 who make a pretence of doing it, without
 being previously disposed and inclined by
 GOD’s holy Spirit, are only *hypocrites* and
self-deceivers.

12. What GOD, on his part, offers in this
 covenant, is *himself*, principally and com-
 prehensively: “I will be their GOD.” And
 this includes *all blessedness* which any
 creature is capable of enjoying. When
 GOD promises to be a GOD to us, he promis-
 es to be a GOD *all-sufficient* to us, to be
ours, in *all his fulness*, according to our
 measure and capacity: For, if having this

GOD, we are *straitened*, it is not in *him*, (as the Apostle says) but in *ourselves** ; in the *narrowness* of our own capacities, not in his *infinite fulness*. He undertakes to *be to us*, and to *do for us*, all that it belongs to him, as an infinitely *wise, holy and good* GOD, to *be* and to *do*, to his covenant people.

12. We may see then that *all good and happiness* is virtually sum'd up in this covenant offer and promise ; “ I will be your GOD.” Accordingly, in other places of scripture, GOD, in condescension to human weakness, is more particular and explicit, in this covenant tender :—“ I will give “ grace and glory, and no good thing will “ I with-hold from my covenant people. “ All are yours. All things shall work to- “ gether, for good to them that are in co- “ venant with GOD.”

14. As GOD proposes *himself* in all his fulness in this covenant, according to the *measure and capacities* of his creatures ; so when he makes his demand from us, of what we, on our part, are to *be* and *do*, in entering into covenant with him, he demands *ourselves and our all, absolutely and without reserve* ; that we surrender *ourselves and ours* ; whatever we *have, are, or can do*, wholly up to his pleasure and disposal ; to do *with us, for us, in us and by us*, just what seemeth good unto him.

* 2 Cor. vi. 12.

15. As submission to GOD's *will*, and unshaken trust and reliance on his *power, goodness, veracity* and *faithfulness*, are important conditions of this covenant, *on our part*; so, being assured of grace and glory, we are to leave *all inferior goods*, which relate merely to our present state of existence, wholly and entirely to the *will of God*, endeavoring to subject our will, with regard to them, wholly to his, firmly believing, that every thing in our lot is appointed by infinite wisdom and goodness, and being only concerned that all things may work together for GOD's *glory*, and our *spiritual* and *eternal happiness*.

ESSAY IV.

CHAP. II.

The same continued.

I. **M**EN may be said to enter into covenant with GOD either *indirectly* or *directly*.

2. The very sustaining of a profession of religion, or appearing not to deny, but rather to avow, that we are the people of GOD, carries in it an implicit acknowledgment of a *covenant transaction*. The bulk of whole Christian nations appear to be thus in covenant with GOD.

3. In every prayer to GOD, and acknowledgment of his authority over us, and right to dispose of us, there is the *matter of a covenant* with him ; and though we may not intend, or directly avow any such thing, yet we do *indirectly and implicitly* give ourselves to GOD, in covenant, and bring ourselves under the penalty of the covenant, if we do violate or break it.

4. The most solemn acts of directly and explicitly entering into covenant with GOD, are—a private surrender and self-dedication of ourselves to GOD:—The giving up of our children to GOD in baptism—and the renewing our baptismal covenant at the Lord's table.

5. A private and solemn surrender and dedication of ourselves to GOD, through the Redeemer, is one of the earliest duties we should perform in religion, after we have come to understand the nature of our baptismal vows, and the obligations we are under to GOD. Forms of this kind may be met with in many devotional books.

6. This kind of covenanting should be performed in a very solemn and deliberate manner.

7. Something of the same nature ought to be done by every communicant, both in his preparation for the Lord's supper, and at the ordinance itself ; wherein an express recognition should be made, of all the prin-

cial and essential parts of our covenant with GOD, through the Redeemer.

8. The giving up of our children to GOD in baptism, is an occasion upon which we are called to an express covenant surrender of ourselves, and all that is ours to GOD : We do, at that time, expressly acknowledge GOD to be *our* GOD, and offer him our children, in virtue of a covenant which is supposed to subsist between GOD and us : And the vows we make for our children, suppose our own vows of the same kind.

9. Is it not surprising, that the same covenant which we renew with so much solemnity at the Lord's supper, is generally so superficially renewed at the baptism of the children of most Christians ?

10. If a solemn preparation is necessary in order to the right renewing of our covenant with GOD at the gospel supper ; is it less so before we give up our children to GOD in baptism ? Is not *equal solemnity, seriousness and devotion* necessary on both occasions ?

ESSAY V.

*A FORM of renewing COVENANT with
GOD, at the LORD'S TABLE.*

AS our great business in this ordinance is to call into lively and grateful remem-

brance, the painful and ignominious death of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to keep up this remembrance of it in the church and world:—As we are led to remember it not only as a *confirmation of the truth of his doctrines*, but also as a *sacrifice of atonement* for the sins of the world, and for our sins, and consequently as the highest and dearest pledge of his and his Father's love to us, and the sweetest and surest ground of our hope, as believing sinners:—And as our principal business at this sacrament, (this feast upon a sacrifice) is solemnly to *enter into and renew our covenant with God*, over these dear memorials of his Son's death—over these signs and seals of the blood of the everlasting covenant:—In which solemn transaction we do profess to take and avouch God, to be our God—and to become his people, according to the terms of the covenant. I have thought it might be exceeding proper and useful upon these occasions, to rehearse and repeat at large the form of a solemn covenant transaction, as it ought to be made, in substance, by every communicant, *at or before this sacrament*.

I shall therefore put this form of covenanting with God, in the *first person of the singular number*—that every one of us may, upon this occasion, use it *for himself*, and make it *his own*.

Let me therefore beseech each of my fellow-communicants, as in the immediate presence of the GOD of heaven, and over the memorials of his Son's sacrifice—and as, on this solemn occasion, about to enter into and renew covenant with GOD, to let their hearts and thoughts go along with this form of a solemn covenant transaction, and cordially and deliberately to make it *their own covenant*;—each saying in his heart with me, and saying it *sincerely and feelingly*.

“Most great and adorable JEHOVAH ! Behold ! a poor, insignificant guilty worm of the dust, here, prostrate before thee, as it were on the bended knees of my soul, acknowledging thy glorious majesty and divine perfections, thine eternal duration, infinity, self-sufficiency, all-sufficiency, unchangeableness, and incomprehensibility—thine almighty power, all penetrating knowledge, unerring wisdom, unbounded goodness, unfailing faithfulness, impartial justice and undissembled truth.

“I desire to rejoice (and O ! that the whole world would rejoice !) that there is *such a GOD* and that this GOD ruleth in the heaven and in the earth, and doeth according to his most sacred, sovereign, and holy will throughout the universe.

“Lord, I acknowledge with *gratitude and joy*, that I am thy *creature*, thy *servant*.

want, thy *subject*, under infinite and unchangeable obligations to *know, serve, honor, fear, reverence* and *obey* thee ; yea to *be* and to *do* just what thou pleasest. And I would forever adore thee, that thou hast so closely connected *my duty*, with *thine own glory*, and *my highest interests* : That although my foundation is in the dust ; all my original shame, and my nature sin—yet thou art giving encouragement to such a *base, guilty wretch as I am*, and *have been*, to approach thee the *eternal all*, the fountain of all being, holiness and happiness through *Jesus CHRIST*, the eternal Son of thy love, with hopes of being pardoned, accepted and saved by his most precious merit and mediation ! LORD, what am I ? what is my *original, lineage, descent* and *nature* ? what my *conduct, merit* and *desert*, that thou should'st once condescend to look down from the throne of thy majesty and holiness, upon such a creature as *I have been*, and *still am* :—That thou should'st once permit me to name thy *venerable name* with my guilty lips—much more, that thou should'st stoop to enter into covenant with me, or cause me to hope for any blessing from thee !

“ Verily, O LORD, I *blush*, am *ashamed* and even *confounded*, at the very thoughts of this matchless grace and condescension ! —And were it not that *thou LORD*, hast

spoken it ;—that *it is thine own* revealed, declared will, to regard such sinners through Christ, and that thou canst never *change, lie nor repent*, I should even now despair of any mercy at thy hands :—For, I must confess in the presence of the all-seeing, heart-trying God, whom the closest hypocrisy cannot deceive, that I have been an *unprofitable servant*, a *prodigal son*, a *wandering sheep*, a *barren fruitless tree*, a cumberer of the ground, a *vile obstinate* rebel, who, by ten thousand aggravated sins, have deserved the hottest hell !—How often hast thou called thy backsliding creature, while I have refused ?—How often hast thou stretched out thy gracious hand and merciful sceptre, while I have disregarded ?—What *commandment* of thine have I not broken ?—What *talent* or *ordinance* have I not misimproved ?—What *mercy* have I not slighted ? What instance of thy grace and favor ; what gift of thy providence, have I not turned into wantonness ?—How far have I been from using this world so as not to abuse it ?—How many duties have I neglected through *sloth* and *vanity*, and other *base, low, unworthy* motives ?—How many sins have I committed against light, knowledge, and conscience of duty ?—How many of my poor fellow-creatures (those immortal souls, for whom Christ died !) have I tempted and

drawn into sin, by evil example, wicked solicitations, and foolish, light, vain, unchristian behavior?—And therefore have *their* guilt to answer for as well as *my own*!—How unwatchfully, uncircumspectly, and unlike a child of light, and disciple of Christ, I have walked, LORD, thou knowest?—How many *foolish, idle words* and *vain, sinful jests* have proceeded out of my mouth;—and how little of that which was good for the use of edifying, or that might minister grace to the hearers? How many of my poor fellow-creatures have I *corrupted* and *defiled*; but how few have I *edified* and *profited*?—How little have I watched over my *heart*, my *thoughts*, my *lips*, my *passions*, my *temper*, and *spirit*?—How easily have I been provoked to *anger*, to *revenge*, to *envy*, to *slander*, to *rash* and *uncharitable judging*, and to *injurious* and *abusive language* against my neighbors, yea, against my dear christian brethren, whom I should love in the LORD *fervently* and *unfeignedly*, and to whom I should do *good* and not *evil*, all the days of my life! How unthankful, ungrateful, impatient, undutiful, unhumble have I been! How shamefully defective and wanting have I been, in all the relative and social duties of life, as a child, a parent a neighbor, a friend, a husband a wife, a subject, a Christian!—O, alas! How cold and stupid in prayer! How inconstant and inde-

vout in my attendance on holy ordinances and holy duties ! How careless in reading thy holy word, and treasuring it up in my memory !

“ O LORD, thou knowest these things altogether, and now they lie as a heavy burden upon my soul ! Now I see their folly and their *baseness* ; their *guilt* and their *treachery* ! And O ! that I might see them clearer and clearer, until the light might pain my very heart, and make my soul sink in humility, and overflow with the tears of sincere, unfeigned contrition and repentance ! Behold, LORD, I am vile ! What shall I answer before thee ? I put my hand on my mouth, and my mouth as it were in the dust, and cry out *unclean* before thee. My sins against *light* and *love* ; against *mercies* and *corrections* ; against *advice*s and *reproofs* ; against *vows*, *promises*, *resolutions* and *covenant engagements* ; against God the *Father*, God the *Son*, and God the *holy Ghost* ; against God, my neighbor and myself. My sins of omission and commission ; of thought, word and deed ; known and unknown ; remembered and forgotten ; of childhood, youth, and manly age :—My sins against reason and conscience ; against the *law* and the *gospel*—are next to an infinite sum ; they are far beyond my numbering ; they are in number more than the hairs on my head, or than the sands

on the sea-shore, which cannot be reckoned: They have gone over my head:—they have ascended up even unto heaven, and bear witness against me, crying for vengeance, like the blood of righteous *Abel*.—And whereas the very smallest of this number is sufficient to sink me into hell, and for ever to separate me from thy gracious presence, —yet O LORD, they are all ever before thee and in the light of thy countenance, accompanied with every circumstance of their guilt and aggravation:—For there never has been a thought in my heart, a word in my mouth, or an action in my life, but thou, O LORD, knowest it altogether. Although I have often studied to conceal and forget my sins, yet they are ever in the light of thy countenance, and recorded in the book of thine infinite knowledge and remembrance, as though they had been but just now committed!

“LORD, be thou therefore merciful unto me a *sinner*; a *great* and *guilty* transgressor! *Mercy, mercy*, is my only suit; my only plea! *Mercy* and *pardon* through the blood of Christ, is *all my hope*, and *all my salvation*!

“O let the King this day at his table grant me the forfeited life of my soul at my request, of *mere undeserved mercy*: For what profit is there in my blood, O thou God of salvation?

“ I have no righteousness of my own to plead, wherefore I should be *pardoned, justified and accepted* of thee to mercy! All my righteousnesses, even the whole sum of them taken together, are but *filthy rags*! They need pardon, but cannot deserve favor. I do, therefore, from my very heart, *renounce and disclaim* every kind and degree of *trust and dependance* on my *prayers, tears, charities, repentances, good frames, holy duties*, and *all my other best works*, for pardon and justification with thee, my GOD. Every duty which I have done since I was born, has been mixed with so much *sin, infirmity and imperfection*, that they are utterly unworthy to be accepted and rewarded by a holy GOD, unless it be through the merit, and for the sake of JESUS CHRIST. I therefore put my whole trust in CHRIST the mediator, as my *surety and atoning sacrifice*; as my *wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption*; as my Lord and Redeemer; my Prophet, Priest and King; for *pardon, salvation and glory*: For I know of no other name given under heaven, whereby I can be saved.

“ I bless thee, O LORD of heaven and earth, that thou art well pleased with sinners, in him the Son of thy love;—that, in him, thou art reconciling a guilty world unto thyself, not imputing their trespasses to them;—that through him sinners have ac-

cess unto thee the Father ;—that thou hast exalted him by thy right hand, to be a Prince and a Saviour, to give *repentance and remission of sins* ;—that whosoever believeth in him, shall not perish, but have everlasting life ;—that through his blood we have remission, even the full forgiveness of all sin ; that whosoever cometh unto him by faith, he will in no wise cast out,—and that I, even I, have liberty to enter into an everlasting covenant with thee, through him, who is the *way*, the *truth*, and the *life* ; the *true and living way* unto thee the Father.

“ Behold, therefore, with an eye of compassion thy *returning prodigal*, thy *lost sheep*, desiring to come unto thee *in this way*, which thou thyself hast appointed. I desire to *come*, Lord draw me by thy holy Spirit ! I desire to *believe*, Lord help thou my unbelief ! I desire to come *weary and heavy-laden* under the burden of my sins ; Lord increase a sense of their insupportable weight, and give me *that rest*, which thou hast graciously promised ! I desire to render my soul and body to thee, with all their powers and faculties—all that I *am*, *have*, and *can do*, sensible of thy right to them by creation, preservation and redemption ; and sorry, heartily sorry, that I ever strayed from thee in any instance, or ever served satan or my own lusts. Lord, do thou graciously

accept the surrender through Christ, and make me in all things, just what thou would'st have me to be. Make me *worthy of thee* and *fit for thy enjoyment*.

“ I call heaven and earth, thyself, thy holy angels, and my fellow-communicants, to witness, *this day* that *here*, over the memorials of thy Son's sacrifice, I do *take* and *vouch* thee, O thou eternal God, to be my covenant God, and my heavenly Father through Christ.—O save thy creature, thy servant, thy subject, thine unworthy child, who putteth his trust in thee, and chooseth thee as his chief good and everlasting portion ! O lift upon me the light of thy countenance ; be reconciled unto me through Christ ; manifest thyself unto me, so as thou dost not unto the world : let all thy divine perfections be engaged for my protection, support, comfort and direction, through the straits and difficulties, the dangers and temptations of this wicked world ; thro' the dark valley of the shadow of death, and into thy blissful and happifying presence, in the world of spirits above. Let no evil spirit, or evil lust, be ever permitted to pluck me out of thy gracious hands ; but lead me by thy counsel here, and afterwards receive me to glory. And now, O God, that I am *thine* by this *express self-dedication*, employ me wholly in thy service, and use me as an instrument of thy glory. Make me

faithful unto the death, and give me a crown of life. Not *my will* but *thy will* be done, both by me, in me, and concerning me. I trust thy wisdom and mercy with my temporal and eternal *all*, and only desire a will to submit and resign to thee in all things, and to acquiesce in all thy dealings and dispensations, as knowing them to be infinitely the *wisest* and the *best*.

“I call heaven and earth to witness *this day*, over these solemn pledges of redeeming love, that I do take the Lord Jesus Christ, the second person of the blessed Trinity, to be my Lord and Saviour; my *head* and *husband*; my *surety*, *propitiation* and *advocate*; my *prophet*, *priest* and *king*; my *righteousness* and *strength*; my *mediator*, *example* and *almighty friend*! O blessed Jesus, thou Son of God, have mercy upon me! I desire to commit and betrust my guilty, precious, perishing soul, with all its everlasting concerns, into thy *faithful*, *powerful*, *compassionate* hands; and would desire above all things, a farther and more experimental knowledge of thy *power* and *grace*, whom I thus trust with mine eternal all, that so my faith and hope may be yet stronger, and my doubts and fears fewer in number and of less strength. Lord I believe; help thou mine unbelief;—I know that the Father hath committed *all power* to thee; hath made thee head over all things for the

good of the church ; hath constituted thee a Prince and a Saviour, to give repentance and remission of sins : I also *know* and *believe*, that thou thyself art the *all-sufficient* God ; and, as mediator, art *perfect* God and *perfect* man, and therefore art every way qualified to be a Saviour for lost and undone sinners : And as thou art *perfectly* qualified, so thou hast often declared thy *great willingness* to seek and to save those that are lost. Lord, save me, thy *lost sheep*. Save me from my sins which are many, and from thy fearful divine judgments which they have deserved ; for thou, Lord, art mighty and able to save unto the uttermost, all sinners that come unto God by thee. I take and avouch thee for my prophet : O reveal thy word in my heart....write thy law there....put thy fear there, and give me the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of thyself, and of thy Father.

“ I take thee for my priest :....O plead the everlasting merit and efficacy of thy sacrifice and of thy blood with the Father, on my behalf, who have no merit of my own. O thou beloved *Son of God*, thou *Lamb of God*, who takest away the sin of the world, whom the Father always heareth, and who never prayest in vain....intercede for me with thy Father, that my sins may be pardoned for the sake of what thou hast done and suffered, and that I may be clothed

with thy most perfect and spotless righteousness. I would receive thee this day, O thou *bleeding Lamb of God*, into a *broken and bleeding* heart ;....a heart pierced with sorrow for my sins, and flaming with gratitude for the precious fruits of thy dying love.

“ I take and *avouch* thee this day, O blessed Jesus, for my *King and Lawgiver* :—LORD, take the possession and dominion of my heart ;—rule supreme there ;—cast out all thine enemies, my lusts, my evil and ungoverned thoughts and passions ;—bring my will and every affection under the authority and direction of thy laws and thy Spirit.

“ I take thee, O blessed Jesus, this day, for my *head and husband* ;—O make me a living member of thy mystical body.—May I daily and hourly derive strength, vigor, spiritual nourishment and growth in grace from thee, the living head of divine influences.—Let this be the day of my spiritual espousals.—Betroth me unto thy self :—Adorn me with the wedding garment of thy righteousness :—Let me, with the king's daughter, be all glorious within ; clothed with the garment of holiness, even that white raiment of needle work, which is the righteousness of the saints, that my soul may be as a bride adorned to meet her husband :—Take me into thy banquet.

ing house, and let thy banner over me be love.—“Awake, O north wind; come thou south, and blow upon my garden, that the odorous spices of divine grace may flow forth; and then let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. Kiss me with the kisses of thy mouth, for thy love is better than wine!” Prepare me for thine eternal embraces; and make me a welcome and happy guest at the wedding supper of the Lamb.

“I do this day, take thee, O blessed Jesus, for my *elder brother* and *forerunner*, who hast taken possession of the promised inheritance, in the name of all thy followers:—O do thou prepare a place, even one of the lowest and humblest mansions in thy Father’s house for me; that I may be forever with thee, to see thy glory and be a humble and thankful partaker of thy happiness.

“I avouch thee, this day, for mine *almighty* and *everlasting friend*;—as a friend who art here given me an amazing and astonishing proof, both of the reality and greatness of thy friendship, in these memorials of thy *bitter passion*, and *bleeding, dying love*: O do thou enkindle in my heart suitable returns of love and friendship. Let me die, rather than not to love thee.—Let me be annihilated, rather than

be thine enemy.—Stand by, and support me, in a course of faithful persevering obedience.—Stand by, and support and comfort me, when all my earthly friends must leave me, and when all their kindest wishes and warmest affections, can afford me no succor or relief.—Stand by, O almighty friend, in the chilling hour of death.—Let thy staff and thy rod then comfort me; and do thou, who hast the keys of death and of the invisible world, be my gracious guardian and conductor, into the cloudless regions of *joy, serenity, peace, and glory.*

“ I do call heaven and earth, and all my christian brethren to witness this day, over these dear and solemn pledges of redeeming love, that I do take the HOLY GHOST, the third person of the everblessed Trinity, to be my *sanctifier, my enlightener, my renewer, my guide and comforter*; praising GOD, for the inestimable gift of his holy Spirit: O thou *heavenly dove*, do thou descend upon my soul, as a *fuller's soap* and *refiner's fire*:—Descend, bearing the olive branch of peace, love, joy and comfort. Make thine abode in my soul, as in thy spiritual temple:—Shed abroad thy divine influences in my heart:.... Banish every lust thence:.. Renew, sanctify, quicken, comfort and seal it, to the day of redemption: Be in me a Spirit of peace, love, joy, and of a sound mind; and do thou, I humbly beseech,

thee, never be provoked to leave or forsake me, until thou hast sanctified me through-out and fitted me for heavenly glory.

“And now O blessed LORD, behold I am *thine*!—*Thine* by creation; preservation; and redemption!—*Thine* by this express covenant engagement, which I desire in the most serious, solemn and affectionate manner to renew at thy table, over the dear pledges of that blood, by which it was ratified and sealed on thy part! I would now embrace the *precious promises* of it, and chuse them for my portion.—I would now resolve, in thy strength, to perform the duties and conditions of it; and to wait upon thee day by day, for fresh supplies of this strength. I wait, O Lord, for thy salvation! I crave not great things in this world. Order all things relating to my body and temporal concerns, just as thy wisdom and goodness will judge most meet for me; only let my soul be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus.

“And as, after I have renewed this my covenant at thy table, I am again to go forth into a *sinful, deluding* world, where I shall be surrounded with fresh temptations:—O let me ever bear this solemn covenant transaction in my mind; that I may not prove treacherous to my *dearest* Lord;—that I may not add the guilt of perjury to that of unfaithfulness. O! let me ever bear about

with me such a sense of the dying love of my dear Redeemer, as may engage me to the most chearful and universal obedience to his laws.—Let me never prove a scandal and disgrace to the christian name, by apostacy, or infidelity ;—and to thy name shall be the praise and glory, through eternal ages. Amen.”

ESSAY VI.

The NATURE, DESIGN and USE of the LORD'S SUPPER.

1. **SACRAMENTS** are solemn ordinances instituted by Christ, *representing, sealing and applying* Christ, and his purchased benefits to the souls of believers.

2. There are *two* such in the New Testament, *viz. baptism and the Lord's supper*, answering to *circumcision* and the *pascal lamb* in the Old Testament dispensation of the covenant of grace.

3. These sacraments are institutions of a positive, and not of a moral nature ; deriving all their worth from the authority which enjoins them, and as binding upon us as any moral duties whatever.

4. These gospel sacraments are not burthenfome, expensive and laborious ; but cheap and easy, and yet of useful significance.

5. Baptism fitly represents our need of

being *washed by the blood*, and *sanctified by the Spirit* of Christ, which are both emblematically set forth by the cleansing, purifying nature of the element of water made use of in that ordinance; and it is to be *but once* administered as an *initiatory ordinance*, on our first entering into the church of Christ.

6. As, in baptism, we take upon us the profession of Christianity, and submit to the whole religion of Christ, we do virtually oblige ourselves in this ordinance, to receive the Lord's supper.

7. The Lord's supper obliges us to the same duties as baptism, and no more, nor any other: Both are *signs* and *seals* of the *same covenant*. The specific difference seems to lie here: Baptism is but *once* administered as an initiatory ordinance;—the Lord's supper often, as a strengthening and nourishing ordinance: Baptism has a more special reference to the *religion of Christ*:—The Lord's supper, to Christ, the author and founder of it. How falsely then do many baptized christians imagine themselves under *fewer obligations* to holiness, than *communicants*?

8. “The Lord's supper is a sacrament,
“wherein, by giving and receiving bread
“and wine, according to Christ's appointment, his death is shewed forth; and the
“worthy receivers are (not after a corpo-

“ral and carnal manner, but by faith) made
 “partakers of his body and blood, with all
 “his benefits, to their spiritual nourishment
 “and growth in grace*.”

9. This sacrament is enjoined on all Christians, as a pledge of their duty, obedience and allegiance to Christ, the glorious captain of salvation; and to keep up in their hearts a grateful remembrance of his dying love.

10. It was instituted by Christ, just before his death, after he had eat his last pass-over; is enjoined upon his followers by his dying command, and is to be continued by them to the end of the world.

11. The *specific nature* and *proper notion* of this ordinance, is, “A memorial of
 “Christ’s sacrifice; or a keeping up the
 “fresh remembrance of his death in the
 “church, together with the cause, design
 “and benefits of it; all which benefits are
 “sealed and applied to believers in receiving it.” *This do in REMEMBRANCE of me, and as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do SHEW FORTH the Lord’s death, ’TILL HE COME†.*

12. Both the sacraments are standing evidences of our *guilty, polluted* state by sin, and of the hope we have of pardon and cleansing through Christ.

* See the Assembly’s Shorter Catechism.

† 1 Cor xi, 23,—29. Luke xxii. 19, 20.

13. In preparing to receive, and in actually receiving the Lord's supper, we are led to consider the death of Christ, on which it is founded, in the following important and interesting views :.... In contradistinction to Jews, we are led to consider the cross of Christ as *his* and *our* glory ; we are led to consider his death as that of a *martyr* or *witness*, to the truth of the doctrines which he taught, and as that of our example living and dying ;... and also as *a sacrifice*, by which the sin of man was expiated : And this sacrament we are led to consider, as a *feast upon a sacrifice* ; from which view of it, many important considerations arise,.... as (1.) It naturally reminds us of the evil and accursed nature of sin, which needed such an expensive sacrifice.... (2.) Of the incomprehensible love of God, who furnished such a sacrifice for the expiation of human guilt.... (3.) As those who *feasted upon a sacrifice*, were supposed to be in a state of favor with the Deity to whom the sacrifice had been offered, and to be in perfect friendship one with another ; so thus feasting on the sacrifice of Christ, denotes our fellowship and communion with the Father and the Son, and that we are united together in the strictest bonds of christian charity and love.... (4.) This sacrament being a *feast upon a sacrifice*, we ought to consider it as a proper form of renewing covenant with

God, and a sign and means of our participating in the blessings of this covenant....

(5.) This sacrament represents the death of Christ as that of a conqueror, who conquered in dying, and who, by his resurrection, has secured victory for all his followers....

(6.) His death, as represented in this sacrament, should be considered as the ground of his exaltation, and of that extensive dominion and power which he now holds in the heavenly world, for the good of his church : And, (7.) While we here contemplate his death, our thoughts should spring upward to his glorified state, and forward, to his second triumphant appearance, when we shall have reason to glory in a once crucified master.

14. The chief *use* and *design* of this sacrament, is to *perpetuate*, and, as it were, to *eternize* the memory of the love of God and of Christ to us ; to actuate, enkindle and enflame our love and gratitude to them ; to bring frequently into our remembrance the most powerful motives to universal holiness, and to unite the hearts of christians in the firmest and most endearing bonds of love.

15. None seem to have a right to this ordinance, in the sight of God, but the *true disciples of Jesus*.

16. None have a right to it, in the sight of men, but such as appear, in a judgment of charity, to be *real christians*.

17. None therefore should be admitted to it, without a due, previous examination of their christian knowledge, and some evidence of their sincerity in religion.

18. Those who have been admitted upon mistaken notions of their sincerity, may be again excluded, when the church receives proof of such mistakes.

19. No person ought to approach this ordinance, without *actual* preparation for it: Tho' if they are *habitually* serious, their actual preparation, (when unexpected opportunities of communicating offer themselves) need cost them but little time or trouble; and, it is a childish and a dangerous superstition, to imagine, that any certain time, or any certain number of devotions, are absolutely necessary in order to our acceptance in this ordinance.

ESSAY VII.

That HABITUAL and ACTUAL PREPARATION which is necessary for worthily receiving the LORD'S SUPPER, more fully considered.

1. **D**IVINES sometimes distinguish our preparation for the sacrament of the supper, into *habitual* and *actual*.

2. *Habitual* preparation seems to imply two things; *first*, A *gracious state*; and

secondly, A regular, pious, circumspect life.

3. It seems evident from the very nature and design of this ordinance, that it belongs only to *true disciples* and *real christians*. It is a nourishing ordinance ; but such only can be nourished as have *life* : Besides, the graces of faith, love, hope, &c. which are properly exercised in this ordinance, can only be exercised by *real, living christians*. It is a solemn renewal of our covenant with GOD ; but how can those renew a covenant, which they never entered into at all ? How can such as are in league with the devil and their lusts, be said to enter into covenant with GOD ? What sincerity can there be in such a transaction as this ? Does it not imply the most insolent, bare-faced mockery ?

4. It implies also a *regular, pious, circumspect* life, such as becometh the gospel of Christ : That a man's life correspond in some measure with his profession, and the truth and sincerity of his religion appear visible, in the genuine and exemplary fruits of it.

5. Those who have *this habitual preparation of soul* for holy ordinances, need be under no scruple of approaching the Lord's table upon the shortest warning ; because, having the essentials of religion, and a habitual seriousness and sobriety of spirit, their sincere endeavors to please GOD in the way of commanded duty, can never be unac-

ceptable to him, nor unavailable to themselves. It would, therefore, be sinful in such to abstain from a sealing ordinance, merely because they have not had much time to make a formal, actual preparation; because, having already those good dispositions which such a preparation is intended to beget, such a preparation is not absolutely necessary; and not to dispense with it, in such circumstances, would be superstition, not religion.

6. Yet where time and opportunity permit, the very best men should by no means neglect a careful, actual preparation of soul for attending so solemn an ordinance. For (1.) It is expressly commanded: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup** (2.) The business to be transacted at the Lord's table is of a very solemn nature: It is no less than entering into, or renewing covenant with the great God, over the memorials of his Son's sacrifice;—And whoever considers what kind of creatures we are; the nature, terms and conditions of the covenant, and how solemnly, and circumspectly every part of it should be transacted, and that this is the principal business of an actual preparation (which should by no means be neglected 'till we come to the Lord's table) will surely see reason for some

* 1 Cor. xi. 28.

time and care in this business, when we can command it. (3.) The very best men are not always in a proper frame of mind, for the most common and ordinary duties of religion: Good men find it necessary to take some pains with their hearts for the right performance of the duties of *prayer* and *bearing the word*, and surely proportionably more care should be taken in preparing for the sacrament of the supper.

7. Actual preparation consists in a careful endeavor, to put the heart and affections in the best frame and posture possibly for approaching God in this holy ordinance; and is expressed in scripture, under the general notion of self-examination: *Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat, &c.*

8. The things concerning which we ought principally to examine ourselves, are our *knowledge, faith, love or charity, repentance, and new obedience.*

9. A knowledge of *ourselves, our sins, wants, weakness, guilt and danger*; a competent knowledge of God, his perfections and laws, the obligations we are under to him, and the duties we owe him;—a knowledge of the Savior, and the way of salvation by the new covenant;—and a competent knowledge of the sacrament of the supper, the graces there to be exercised, and the duties there to be performed, is indispen-

bly necessary, in order to our rightly and worthily partaking of the Lord's supper ; lest, *not discerning the Lord's body, we eat and drink judgment to ourselves**.

10. Faith in Christ, as the Son, and sent of God ; and in his power and grace as an all-sufficient and most willing Savior, is a grace, the exercise of which is of absolute necessity in this ordinance ; and as there is no receiving or applying of Christ, without this grace, it is necessary we should examine ourselves concerning the reality of it, before we approach this ordinance, lest we should be found *mockers of God*.

11. As the *eucharist* or *sacrament of the supper*, is founded on the inconceivable love of God and Christ, to a lost world, and is intended as a badge, sign, means and cement of love and unity among christian brethren,—love to God and *man*, is a grace of absolute necessity in all worthy communicants ; and therefore, the truth and reality of it in our hearts should be carefully examined into, before we venture to approach this gospel banquet : For, to approach this *love-feast* without *supreme love to God*, and *cordial affections for our fellow-christians*, or while the contrary temper prevails in the soul, would be the vilest abuse.

12. We have already observed, that im-

* 1 Cor. xi. 29.

penitent sinners, or those who live allowedly in the course or practice of any one known sin, have no right to this ordinance; and this may show the necessity of examining ourselves of the truth and reality of our *repentance*, in order to our approaching this sacrament worthily.

13. We can by no means have a satisfying evidence of the truth of our *faith*, *love*, or *repentance*, unless we are conscious, that our lives are bettered and reformed, and that we have been enabled, at least for some while past, to pay a *new obedience* to the divine laws: For, the only satisfying proof we can have of the *truth of our graces*, is the *fruit of holiness* which they produce in our lives and conversations; and so from the goodness of the fruit, we rationally infer the goodness of the tree. It is highly convenient therefore, for all who design to approach the sacrament, to try their sincerity in religion by this *touchstone*; and not rashly to believe, that they are possessed of the sacramental graces and qualifications, 'till they feel the energy of them warm at their hearts, and experience the fruits of them, in some degree of holiness of life.

14. Not only must worthy communicants have these graces *in reality*; but the principal design of *actual preparation* is to bring them into *lively exercise*, by prayer, meditation, self-examination, reading the

scriptures, and other proper devotional books. By frequent meditations on the heinousness of sin; dignity, sufferings, shame and death of Christ, who was the atoning sacrifice for sin; the wonderful love of God in providing such a sacrifice, and freely delivering him up for us all; the invaluable benefits and blessings procured for penitent believers by this sacrifice:—By frequent meditations of this kind, the *faith* of communicants should be increased and strengthened: their *love* inflamed; their sorrow for sin, indignation against it, and repentance of it perfected, and their resolutions to holy obedience invigorated; so that when they actually approach the Lord's table, these graces may not move heavily and awkwardly for want of use, as though the chariot wheels of the soul were taken off; but in a brisk, lively, active and vigorous manner, like the *chariots of Aminadab*; each acting in its proper sphere, and all of them harmoniously and in concert, lifting up the soul towards heaven.

15. Hence may be drawn a powerful argument for the *frequent* receiving of the Lord's supper: For, if the right receiving of the Lord's supper requires the vigorous exercise of all the noblest graces of the christian religion;—if it is indeed an *epitome* or *summary* of the whole of practical

christianity ;—if it be necessary for those who would worthily receive this ordinance, to meditate on the *chief, vital* doctrines of our holy religion, and to exercise its noblest graces, by the way of preparation for this duty.—It may hence be inferred, that the *oftener* we receive this sacrament aright, *i. e.* the *more frequently* our souls are employed in those divine preparatory exercises, the more rapidly must they grow in knowledge and in grace, and be fitted for every good word and work.

16. Since all the benefit to be reaped from holy ordinances, is only to be expected by a *proper preparation* for them, and a due *attendance* on them, it is not at all to be wondered at, that the souls of those who receive the sacrament, without due preparation, do decay and go backwards in religion : For, to trifle with holy things, betrays such an irreverence and atheism of heart, as must needs, in time, provoke God wholly to withdraw his good Spirit from such triflers, and leave them totally under the power of *blindness of mind* and *hardness of heart*. Hence it often happens, in fact, that *careless, untender* and *uncircumspect* professors of religion, turn out, in the end, *ten-fold more reprobate, profligate* and *abandoned*, than other sinners, who have never thus profaned and abused the sacraments.

ESSAY VIII.

Our proper DUTY immediately after receiving the LORD'S SUPPER, and that course of life, in consequence of it, by which we may most effectually honor our CHRISTIAN profession.

1. **W**E should retire as soon as possible to examine ourselves; of our frames and exercise of mind at this holy ordinance.

2. If we find that we have had lively exercises of the sacramental graces, we should humbly and heartily thank God for the aids of his Spirit, and importunately beseech him to continue these gracious frames, and preserve us from forfeiting them by fresh acts of sin.

3. If we find that our frames and affections have been dull, dead, or trifling, we ought attentively to consider from whence this may have proceeded. If we are conscious that we have been at due pains to prepare our hearts, and that we have indulged no wilful sin; and if we find that our dulness and coldness was matter of grief to us at the ordinance, we ought not to be over-much dejected, but hope that it may have proceeded from bodily indisposition, and that we may have nevertheless been accepted. We should also beseech God

to vouchsafe those comforts now, which were withheld from us at his table, and that he would enable us perseveringly to seek them. But,

4. If we find that this uncomfortable frame has been owing to carelessness, and a want of due preparation on our part, or has proceeded from a consciousness of guilt from some indulged iniquity or unmortified lust, we should deeply lament such a criminal circumstance before God, apply earnestly to the blood of sprinkling for cleansing, and implore the divine pardon and mercy through Christ.

5. It becomes us immediately after this ordinance, to renew our holy resolutions, and to call up all our vigilance, for the two following reasons : (1.) *Satan* is peculiarly busy, after sealing ordinances, in endeavouring to rob us of the comforts of religion; to undo what was done at the ordinance; and either to cajole us into *security*, or to drive us into *despair*; and, generally speaking, the greater sensible comfort we have had in the ordinance, the greater danger shall we be in of falling into *spiritual pride* or *fatal security* after it. It has been also observed, that men are liable to fall into the heaviest temptations immediately after sacraments. *Satan's* most violent assaults upon our Saviour, happened immediately after his baptism, the visible descent of the

holy Ghost upon him, and that signal honor done him, by a voice *from the excellent glory**; and it was on the back of his first sacrament, and after the most confident and sanguine resolutions of *Peter*, that he was tempted to deny his Lord and Master, and so scandalously yielded to the temptation†.

(2.) It becomes us to renew and strengthen our resolutions, that our christian profession may be adorned, and that christianity may not suffer by our follies and indiscretions.

6. These good resolutions should be formed *wholly and only* in the strength of Christ; and indeed, *this itself* ought to be one of our most solemn resolutions, that we will *live wholly by faith on the Son of GOD*. This is that all-important doctrine of humility and self-denial which is inculcated upon us, throughout the whole gospel, and which is indeed the very *spirit and genius* of the gospel itself, that, renouncing all self-righteousness and self-dependance, we are to rely wholly on the righteousness and strength of the Redeemer: going forth to perform all duty, and to encounter all temptation, only in his strength and in the power of his might; casting all our cares upon him who careth for us, and desiring to be found only in him, clothed with his righteousness. Had *Peter's* good resolutions been formed

* Luke iii. 21, 22. — iv. 1, &c.

† Mark xiv. 29, — 71.

in this manner, he could never have fallen. The arm of omnipotence would have been his sure defence, and his head would have been shielded in the day of battle.

7. If our souls have been properly exercised at this sacrament, our conduct and conversation will shine afterwards with a peculiar lustre. Holy exercises will probably shew themselves by their natural fruits. Our faces will shine like that of *Moses* when he returned from conversing with God on the mount; and we shall give the world occasion to *take knowledge of us, that we have been with Jesus**.

8. It will be advantageous after sacraments, expressly to mention our sacramental engagements in all our prayers, as an expedient to keep a solemn sense of them alive on our minds.

9. When we are called out in the course of providence to encounter any trial, temptation or difficult and self-denying duty (which must frequently be the case with every christian) we should call to remembrance, this our solemn covenant, so publicly transacted, and so lately renewed; and ask our consciences what conduct will best become us as communicants, who have bound ourselves by solemn and public vows to be the Lord's and to live wholly to his honor and glory.

* Acts iv. 14.

10. That course of life by which we may best honor our christian profession after this sacrament, seems to be the following. (1.) Our conversation ought in all things to be such as becometh the gospel of Christ*. (2.) We should have a constant eye to the example of Christ, and carefully study it, as laid down in the gospel, with a particular design of being conformed to it†. (3.) We should endeavor to show the world by our outward deportment, that we enjoy a serene, cheerful and happy state of mind; yet at the same time we should guard in a particular manner, against discovering a relish for *sensual, sinful indulgences*, or a disposition to levity, trifling and vanity. (4.) It is of the utmost importance to the honor of our profession, that we *govern our passions*; as christian professors, who indulge *anger, malice, envy, covetousness, revenge*, or the like, are the foulest blots and scandals of religion. (5.) If communicants would not be guilty of crucifying their Lord afresh, let them be careful of truth in their words, faithfulness in their promises, honesty in their dealings, modesty, sobriety and temperance in their lives, and that on all occasions they speak honorably of religion.

* Philip. i. 27. Eph iv. 1. &c. Col. i. 10. 1 Thes. ii. 12.

† Matth. xvi. 24. 1 Pet. ii. 21. 1 John ii. 6. Rom viii. 29.

ESSAY IX.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS *on the INCARNATION and BIRTH of CHRIST, proper before or after the LORD'S SUPPER.*

1. FROM the amazing change of circumstances which our Lord underwent in his incarnation, we have an astonishing demonstration of the riches of God's love to our world, and of his mercy to lost sinners.

2. Also of the unspeakable condescension of Christ: And this is amazingly heightened by his perfect foreknowledge of every circumstance of *pain, shame and poverty*, which should accompany his incarnation, and the long space of time in which he should suffer this eclipse of glory, and series of ignominious sufferings.

3. From that abasement, poverty and pain to which Christ stooped that he might save human sinners, and to which his loving Father freely delivered him up for us all, we may and must infer the unspeakable *importance of a human soul*, and of its redemption and salvation: Also, the *dreadful evil of sin and eternal misery*, its just wages, to deliver us from which, the *Son of God* condescended to be *born of a woman*, and to *die on a cross*!

4. From this wonderful stoop of humility and condescension in the *Son of God*, and those abasing humiliating circumstan-

ces, in which he chose to appear in our nature, we learn how little value God sets on those things which are so highly esteemed among men; I mean worldly riches, grandeur, honor and high estate..... And hence we see worldly pride and vanity, worldly ambition and avarice, or immoderate desire of worldly riches, in their true light, and have the best antidote against them.

5. From the mean and obscure birth and humble circumstances of the *Son of God*, compared with his amiable and divine character, we are taught not to despise men on account of their obscure birth, or humble circumstances in life, but to form our estimate of them and respect for them, on their moral characters, personal worth, and the God-like qualities and perfections of the soul and inward man, which alone are estimable in themselves, and in the critical discerning eye of God.

6. From the obscure birth and humble circumstances of the *Son of God*, the poor, needy and despised things of this world may borrow an argument of consolation in their mean and straightened circumstances. Why should a real christian be mortified by the contempt of the world, when this was precisely his Master's case? Nay, ought it not rather to be an honor to the *pious poor*, that they are in the same circumstances with their divine Master; who was despised of

men, and had not where to repose his venerable head?

7. Our Saviour's mean birth and low circumstances, may teach us how little account we should make of the things of *time* and *sense* in general, and how little all worldly pomp, honor and splendor can contribute to our true happiness. Who so happy and blessed as the *Son of God*? Who so contented as he? And yet who *so poor* and *despised*? And this should also teach us how we should stand affected to worldly things—That *quietness* and *self-deniedness* of children; that holy indifference with regard to worldly things, and that *meekness*, *humility* and *contentedness* of mind, which is so distinguishing a characteristic of the children of God, and the disciples of Christ.

ESSAY X.

ADOPTION into the FAMILY of GOD.

1. **M**EN are called the *sons of God* in various senses in scripture,—as invested with worldly honors and titles*, —as in external covenant with God†, —and as God's creatures and offspring‡.—The angels are also called *sons of God*||;

* Psal. lxxxii. 6.

† Exod. iv. 22.

‡ Mal. ii. 10. Acts xvii. 28.

|| Job xxxviii. 7.

and Jesus Christ is the *Son of God* by way of eminence, and in a very singular and peculiar sense: But believing sinners only are the *sons of God* by *regeneration* and *adoption*.

2. Adoption is a word borrowed from the civil law, and signifies the choosing of a stranger by those who have an estate, and no issue, and give him the political and legal relation of a son and heir to their estate, and engaging to deal by him as though he were the issue of their own body.

3. We are all, by nature, children of wrath, children of the devil, and strangers and enemies to God. God's adopting us, is therefore, a more generous and merciful act than human adoption, and differs from it in the following respects.—(1.) When men adopt, they fix their love on strangers, because they are destitute of children; but God need not have done this, seeing he sustains the relation of a Father to myriads of holy and happy beings, who have never, by apostacy, forfeited his paternal love. (2.) Some excellence or hopefulness in the persons adopted by men, is generally the motive of their adopting them; but God saw nothing in us amiable, excellent, promising or engaging, but every thing just the reverse.* (3.) Men cannot change the temper or disposition of those whom they

adopt; but God gives a temper and disposition suitable to the relation: They receive from him *the Spirit of adoption*, whereby they cry, *Abba, Father*.*

4. We are adopted by God *in Christ*, and all the blessings which God gives us, as his sons, flow to us *in and through Christ*, as the channel of their conveyance. Christ, in consequence of *his Sonship* is made *heir of all things*,† and the whole inheritance of God's *human family*, is put into the hands of their elder brother for them. Indeed, he has purchased the inheritance in their name and stead, and has the right of dispensing it to his human brethren; so that adopted sinners are *heirs of God*, and *joint heirs with Christ*, in whom is treasured up all fulness for their supply.‡

5. The privileges of believers, in consequence of their adoption, are exceeding many, gracious and astonishing. Their state and relation is altered: From being children of the *devil*, they are become the children of God by faith in Jesus Christ, and have God's name, and his Son's name put upon them;||—from being slaves to the *devil* and his lusts, they are restored to the glorious liberty of the *sons of God*; they

* Rom. viii. 15.

† Eph. i. 3.

‡ Luke xxii. 29. Rom. viii. 19. John xx. 17. 1 Cor. i. 3.

|| Isa. lxiii. 19. Eph. iii. 10.

are taken into God's family and household, are made fellow citizens with the saints, and, in consequence of this, are entitled to protection, provision, and communion with their Father. Particularly, they are promised protection;* plenteous provision;† *sweet intimacy* and *communion* with God in Christ;‡ *bold* and *free access* to him as children to a Father;|| and correction when they stand in need of it:** They have, in short, God himself for their portion——
 “Heirs of God: All are yours, and ye
 “are God's, and God is Christ's.” Rich and glorious inventory! They are also at length introduced into the immediate presence of their heavenly Father, in the upper mansions, and fully satisfied with his love, being according to the capacities of their nature, perfectly assimilated to his image and likeness; of which glorious event, the apostle *John* speaks with astonishment and rapture.††

6. The marks of the adopted children of God, are in general, a *reverential*, *submissive*, *loving* and *obedient* temper of mind. If we are indeed the *children of God*, we have received the Spirit of adop-

* Isa. xxxii. 2, 18.

† Psal. xxiii. Isa. xl.

‡ John xiv. 21, 23.——xv. 15. Rev. iii. 20.

|| Heb. iv. 16. Gal. vi. 5. Rom. viii. 15.

** Heb. xii. 6, 11.

†† 1 John iii. 1, 2.

tion, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. We feel that inward reverence towards God, and respect and veneration for him, which a dutiful child does to a loving and respectable father.

7. If we have the Spirit of adoption, we feel supreme love for our heavenly Father, and this will shew itself in the following things: (1.) We shall entertain worthy and delightful thoughts of God, as a most kind, gracious, reconciled Father in Christ; the thoughts of him will be very precious, and our meditations of him will be sweet.* (2.) We shall delight to draw near to God in prayer, with an humble boldness and freedom of soul—to hear *of him* and *from him* in his word—and earnestly desire communion with him in all holy ordinances of worship. (3.) We shall have a real zeal for God's honor and glory in the world; rejoice to see *our Father* honored, and his interest flourishing, and be grieved at heart to see him neglected, blasphemed and dishonored by sinners: And, (4.) we shall earnestly wish and long for a full conformity to our heavenly Father, and the full enjoyment of his love and presence for ever, in *his upper house*.

8. If we are indeed GOD's children by adoption, and do supremely love him that begat, we shall also love all them that are

* Psal. cxxxix. 17.—civ. 34.

begotten of him. We shall love the whole *Christian brotherhood*, so far as they bear the image of their heavenly Father, by whatever names known, into whatever sects or parties split and divided.—Yea, we shall be linked in bonds of tenderest affection, to the whole numerous family both in heaven and on earth, whether our *human brethren* by adoption and regeneration, or our *angelical brethren* by creation and unsinning rectitude and obedience. All who, with us, can call GOD *Father*, will have a distinguished place in our benevolent and complacential affections.*

ESSAY XI.

Of REPENTANCE.

1. **R**EPENTANCE partakes both of the nature of *conversion* and *sanctification*. Conversion begins by repentance; and it is the constant daily duty of true converts, as long as they have sinful natures and imperfect characters.

2. Repentance implies in it, a deep and afflicting sense of the evil nature and desert of sin; an earnest desire to be freed from its guilt, dominion and condemnation, and sincere endeavors to turn from it to the

* Eph. iii. 15. 1 John v. 1.

service and favor of a holy GOD, through a Redeemer.

3. Therefore the proper subject of repentance, is a sinner in the present life: For, in hell there is no place for repentance; and in heaven, though the blessed will retain the greatest hatred of sin, yet being guiltless and sinless, they can have no proper compunction or contrition for sin, nor any uneasy afflictive sensations of mind on its account. All sin and sorrow will be then for ever done away.

4. Though all sinners will sooner or later be filled with sorrow and distress for what they have done against GOD, yet many in this life are *hardened past feeling*, through the deceitfulness of sin; have their neck as an iron sinew, their brow as brass, and live and die in this *stupid, hardened, remorseless* state, after having drowned the voice of conscience, and grieved the holy Spirit of GOD, which would have sealed them to the day of redemption.

5. Others have also some kind of sorrow for sin, which is never effectual; some kind of repentance which is never true and saving; but, as the apostle expresses it *needeth to be repented of*. We have examples of this in *Cain, Pharaoh, Ahab, the Israelites, Nebuchadnezzar, Judas*, and many under our own observation.

6. We ought, therefore, carefully to distinguish between a *false* and *true* repentance; one that is merely *legal*, and one that is *evangelical*. These are distinguished by their *names* in the *Hebrew*, *Greek* and *Latin* languages, and by their *motives* and *effects*.

7. The words *necham* in the *Hebrew*, *metameleia* in the *Greek*, and *pœnitentia* in the *Latin*, are rendered *repentance* in the *English*; yet they only signify, *trouble* and *vexation after sin*, accompanied with *anguish* and *torment* of mind. The words *shevab* in the *Hebrew*, *metanoia* in the *Greek*, and *resipiscentia* in the *Latin*, are also translated *repentance* in the *English*, though they are of very different meaning from the former, and signify a *change of mind*; a *becoming wise after sin*, and consequently, a *doing better than before*. And *this last only*, is *saving, effectual, evangelical* repentance. In the former sense only, wicked men are said to *repent*, when the dread of God's wrath breaks in upon their consciences, and fills them with the terrific apprehension of their guilt, danger and misery.

8. Conviction of every kind, whether *legal* or *evangelical*, *effectual* or *ineffectual*, is wrought by the *Spirit of God*, who *convinces the world of sin*.*

* John xvi. 8.

9. The Spirit uses various *instruments* and *means* in awakening the soul to a distressing sight and sense of sin, such as reading and hearing the word; afflictive providences, dreams, public and private remonstrances, reproofs and admonitions, or serious reflections excited by some of these.

10. The word of GOD works remorse in the hearts of sinners by discovering to them the purity of the divine nature, the extent of the divine law, the evil and danger of sin, and by leading the sinner to compare his own temper and actions with the law of GOD; while the Spirit enlightens the understanding, and sets home these things on the conscience;* and this is called a *law work*.

11. Repentance *unto life*, or evangelical repentance, is wrought by the *law* and *gospel* in conjunction, acting under the influence and energy of the holy Spirit. The *law* is made to shew the soul its guilt and danger, while the *gospel* points out a remedy: The *law* wounds; the *gospel* heals; The *law* is made to enter, that sin may abound and appear exceeding sinful; the *gospel* shews how grace much more abounds through Jesus Christ.†

12. A mere *legal repentance* may be, and often is ineffectual, as in the cases of

* Jer. xxxi. 19. Rom. vii. 12. Acts ii. 37. 2 Cor. vii. 10.

† Rom. v. 20.

*Pharaoh, Judas, and others; yet it is often preparatory to, and issues in an evangelical repentance.**

13. False and true, or effectual and ineffectual repentance are best distinguished by their concomitant circumstances and effects; as, (1.) A mere legal repentance, is a *terror of conscience*, arising from a *sense of guilt and danger*, which often consists with the love of sin, and a hatred of holiness: But the real gospel penitent truly hates and abhors sin, and himself because of it.† (2.) The true penitent forsakes sin and flees from it, not chiefly as it is *damning*, but as it is contrary to the *nature and will of GOD*, and a vile abuse of gospel grace; and he turns from it to GOD, with a full purpose of, and hearty endeavors after new obedience.‡ (3.) True repentance is ever accompanied with *hope of mercy*; with an apprehension of the mercy of GOD in Christ, and a trust in this mercy.||

14. It is vile and unwarrantable presumption in sinners to hope for pardon or mercy without repentance.

15. Repentance is sadly mistaken by those, who imagine that it consists in being sorry or troubled for sin, while they still continue to commit it.

* Acts ii, &c. 37, — xvi. 27. 34.

† Psal. cxix. 103. Job xlii. 6. Jer. ii. 34, 35. — iii. 25, Ezek. xxxvi. 31.

‡ Hos. xiv. 8. Acts xi. 23. Luke xv. 18, 20.

|| 2 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

16. Let not distressed mourning penitents despair of GOD's mercy, which is particularly promised to such, throughout the whole scriptures.*

17. As we daily sin, repentance is our daily duty: No person in this world will ever be above the exercise of this grace, or above the need of pardon.

ESSAY XII.

Of SANCTIFICATION.

1. **T**O *sanctify* is to *make holy*, and to *be sanctified*, is to *be made holy*; so that *sanctification* and *holiness*, are, for the most part, synonymous terms. Sometimes, indeed, to *sanctify*, signifies, to *set apart a person for the service of GOD*;† which has a near relation to the former sense.

2. Sanctification, as we are here to consider it, is a being *really and heartily devoted to GOD through Christ*: It is the health, beauty and vigor of the soul, whereby all its faculties being renewed, are enabled to *turn from sin to GOD*, and to exert and exercise those graces by which the sanctified person walks before GOD in righteousness and holiness all the days of his

* Matth. xi. 28. Psal. li. 17. — xxxiv. 18. Isa. lvii. 15. Isa. lxvi. 2.

† John xvii. 19. Exod. xxviii. 41.

life, until *grace* is perfected in *glory*. In this sense all christians are *called to be saints*, or to be sanctified; however the devil, aided by human blindness and stupidity, may have turned the term, *saints*, into ridicule among men.*

3. Regeneration is an *instantaneous work*, or rather *act* of God's Spirit, giving a *new* and *divine* principle of spiritual life to the soul. *Justification* and *adoption* are *acts* of God's grace *without us*, whereby a *relative* change passes on our state: But *sanctification* is a *continued progressive work* of God's Spirit *within us*, influencing and co-operating with our endeavors, from the moment of our regeneration, until our dying day, and the complete perfection of our holiness.

4. Sanctification is begun in *conversion* and perfected in *glory*: and includes in it the exercises of *repentance*, and of all the *graces* and *virtues* of the christian life. 'Tis a progressive work, begun, carried on, and perfected by the holy Spirit of God in the human soul; carrying it on from light to light, from strength to strength, and from one degree of holiness to another, 'till at length it appears perfect before God in *Zion*.

5. The two principal branches of sanctification, and which comprehend all the rest,

* Rom. i. 7, &c.

are *mortification* and *vivification*; or, as the scriptures express it, a *dying daily to sin, and living unto righteousness*.*

6. *Dying unto sin, or mortification*, implies in it our utmost endeavors to guard against the prevailing power of sin, and to extirpate or root it out of our souls, by all gospel methods, and by all the instrumental means of religion which God hath appointed for that purpose. And this duty seems to imply in it the following things: (1.) Hearty endeavors to keep up a constant, lively, believing sense and apprehension of the evil nature and desert of sin, both as *defiling* and *condemning*.—(2.) Constant watchfulness against the outbreakings of corrupt nature; with frequent careful examinations whether sin is gaining or losing ground in our souls.—(3.) Constant application to God in Christ, and in the use of the means and ordinances of grace, for help against the power and love of sin:—And this *first*, by faith in the propitiation and merit of Christ for justification, and a sense of pardon—and *secondly*, by faith or trust in the promises, and more directly, in Christ himself, for power and strength to conquer every lust.

7. *Vivification, or a living unto God, or unto righteousness*, as a distinct branch of holiness or sanctification, consists proper-

* Rom. vi. 11,—19.

ly in obtaining, cultivating, and improving in all the virtues and graces of the christian life upon gospel motives and principles. In order to this, our natures must be changed by regeneration; our religious actions must be performed according to the rule of GOD's word; in obedience to his divine authority; in faith; to the glory of GOD as their chief end, and with a humble steadfast reliance on Christ both for *assistance* and *acceptance*:—And this course must be *habitual* and *persevering*; or, as the scriptures beautifully express it,—*a walking with GOD*.

8. We must act in religion on the following motives, in order to the advancement and perfection of our sanctification:—(1.) We must have the example of Christ habitually in our view as the pattern and model of our temper and behavior.*—(2.) The love of Christ displayed in our redemption, and the application of it in all its steps should constrain us to love him: This is the most powerful inducement to universal gospel holiness.†—(3.) Our relation to GOD as his children; our professed subjection to his laws and government; the glorious hope and inheritance set before us, and the many great and precious promises made unto us in the gospel, are all of them so

* 1 Pet. ii. 21. Philip. ii. 5.

† 2 Cor. v. 14.

many *powerful motives inducing and urging* us on to *perfect holiness in his fear*.*

(4.) Our union to Christ, and our bodies and spirits being, in consequence, members of his mystical body, and temples of the holy Ghost, is a wonderful cogent motive, both to *mortification* and *vivification*; and, to this purpose the Apostle most beautifully and forcibly uses it, 1 Cor. vi. 15,—20.

ESSAY XIII.

*The NATURE and BLESSED EFFECTS of
an UNION with CHRIST.*

1. **U**NION with a person or thing signifies *such a connexion*, as, in some sort, constitutes *sameness or oneness*; to be united therefore to Christ, implies, that the person so united, is in some sense, *one with him*. Christ is in some sense *one with him*, and he *one with Christ*. This is a great mystery, as the Apostle tells us; but it is a mystery plainly revealed and taught in the scriptures, and upon the right knowledge of it depends our right conceptions of vital religion, and much of the comfort of every christian.

2. This union is not *essential*, like that of the three persons in the Godhead; nor

* 2 Cor. vii. 1.

personal, like that of the divine and human natures of Christ in the person of the Mediator ;—nor *thirdly, relative, civil or political*, like that which subsists between a king and his subjects, or a master and his servants or disciples : If this were the nature of *this union*, as some christians understand it, then would it be no mystery as the Apostle represents it ;* but the plainest and most comprehensible thing imaginable : For the weakest understanding can easily understand how it is, that a king and his subjects make *one body politic*, or a master and his servants *one body domestic*. But,

3. It is a *mystical union*. It is a *mystery*, and therefore the *modus* or *manner* of it can admit of no clear and full illustration or explanation, in the present imperfect state. It is however shadowed forth to us under many *figures* or *metaphors*, which prove, that it is a very close and intimate union, and such as transforms and assimilates the soul into the very *temper, likeness, and Spirit* of Christ, and makes it *one with him*, in some very important respects. It is compared to the union of a *vine* with its *branches*,† between a *husband* and his *wife* ;‡ the *corner-stone* or *foundation*, and the *building* ;|| the *head* and mem-

* Eph. v. 32.

† John xv. 1, &c.

‡ Eph. v. 30. Rom. vii. 4.

|| 1 Pet. ii. 4.

bers of the same natural body ;* the union of *meat* and *drink* with *the body*, which they nourish ;† and the union between God the Father and *Christ*.‡ Believers are called *the body of Christ*, and *members in particular*, and are powerfully dissuaded from the sin of uncleanness from this very consideration. In other scriptures, believers are represented as *one Spirit with Christ* ; Christ is *in them the hope of glory*, and *their life* is hid with Christ in God. St. Paul did not live, but *Christ lived in him*. Christ and believers are represented as having *one common interest* ; *one God and Father*, and *one common inheritance* as joint heirs.||

4. We are not to form any gross conceptions of this mystical union between Christ and believers, as though it implied any *physical mixture* or *confusion* of the two beings thus united ; and yet these very expressive metaphors prove, that this union must be something exceeding *close* and *intimate*, such as make the soul truly a partaker of the divine nature and image of Christ ; as *leavens*, *transforms* and *assimulates* it ; such by which the soul imbibes (if I may so speak) the Spirit of Christ ; de-

* Eph. iv. 15.

† John vi. 56.

‡ John xvii. 11.

|| 1 Cor. vi. 17. Col. i. 27——iii. 3. Gal. ii. 20. Matth. xxv. 40. John xx. 17. Rom. viii. 17.

rives strength, and vigor and nourishment from him, as its *living head*, and as the *branches* do from the *parent vine*. Christ *dwells* and *abides* in the believer by his Spirit, and the believer *grows up into him in all things, which is the head*. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can we, except we abide in Christ; for without him, (or out of him, disunited from him) we can do nothing;" bring forth no fruit unto righteousness.*

5. This is a *spiritual union*. "They that are joined to the Lord, are one spirit; it;" and this is true in two important senses: (1.) They partake of the same divine Spirit with their Lord and Master. To *him* indeed God gives not the Spirit by measure. In him it hath pleased the Father that all fulness of the Spirit and his graces should dwell; and, through this union, believers derive from him such supplies of this Spirit, and his graces, as they stand in need of. It is the very same Spirit which dwelleth in Christ, as the head, which is dispensed by him to the living members of his mystical body. All these members, whether in heaven or on earth, drink in the same Spirit, from the same never-failing fountain or repository, and are all united

* John xv. 4, 5.

together in love by the same Spirit. (2.) They have also the *same temper and disposition*; the *same mind* in them which is also in Christ Jesus. His interest is their interest; and his will is their will. They have the same aims, desires, aversions, delights; the same love of God, zeal for his glory, and charity and affection for his creatures and children. And hereby they know that Christ abideth in them, by the Spirit which he hath given them: But those who have not *thus* the *Spirit and temper of Christ*, may be assured that they are none of his.

6. This union of the soul to Christ is formed by *faith*. The holy Spirit works this faith in the soul, and draws it to Christ; and faith receives Christ into the soul, and forms the bond of spiritual union between them; so that thenceforth the soul *lives in Christ*, by *faith and love*, and *Christ lives in the soul* by the quickening, sanctifying and comforting influences of his holy Spirit. *Christ*, says the Apostle, *dwelleth in our hearts by faith. We dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.**

7. The effects of this union are many and exceeding precious: For, (1.) The moment our souls are thus united to Christ, we are in a *justified state*, in a state of

* Eph. iii. 17. 1 John iv. 13. 1 Cor. xii. 13.

acceptance and reconciliation with God, and consequently can never come into condemnation.* (2.) The moment of this union, is the moment of our *spiritual regeneration*: We then begin to be *partakers of a divine nature*, which, by virtue of this union, we receive from Christ the head of divine influences. (3.) With the first moment of this union begins our *eternal*, as well as our *spiritual life*: It is our *birth to glory*. (4.) Our progress in holiness depends entirely on this union; for severed from Christ, we can do nothing. (5.) Fellowship and communion with God is entirely the fruit and effect of this union: For, we can have no fellowship with God, but *in and through Christ*. (6.) Fellowship and communion among Christians is begun and carried on by this union: For, they are all united unto one another *in Christ* and *to God, through Christ*; and this communion is formed by their all partaking the same Spirit from Christ the head, by which as members, they are united together into one body.

8. Let us never rest satisfied, until this blessed union is formed in our own souls; and until we know that it is, by the blessed effects of it, purifying our hearts by faith, and enabling us to bring forth much fruit of holiness.—I had almost forgot to

* Rom. viii. 1.

add, under the foregoing particular, That the perseverance of the saints in grace, is the blessed effect of this union; and that this union, is the strongest argument to prove it.

ESSAY XIV.

Of the FINAL PERSEVERANCE of the SAINTS.

1. **A**S every blessing is valuable in proportion to its *certainly* and *duration*, so the final perseverance of the saints in holiness, if it be true, must be a very comfortable doctrine.

2. This doctrine is necessarily denied by all those who imagine they can put themselves into a state of grace, and put themselves out of it, at pleasure; and indeed by many who acknowledge the necessity of supernatural and efficacious influences of the Spirit in conversion, and yet suppose this grace *admissible* by the converted sinner, who, by his abuse of his natural liberty, may *totally* and *finally* fall from grace.

3. When we speak of a sinner's *persevering in grace*, or *falling from grace*, we mean *true grace*, or a real work of regenerating grace in the soul: For, we make no doubt, that many who have seemed to have had grace, in a judgment of charity, have fallen from that grace which they *only*

seemed to have, but had not in reality. We have observed before, that a very specious religious character is often formed on the principles of *self-love, honor, fame, reputation* and *fear* or the terrors of conscience, from a sight and sense of guilt and demerit, which, although it is exceeding *hollow, defective* and *imperfect*, yet often imposes not only on a credulous world, but also upon the persons who sustain it. None but God certainly and infallibly knows whether persons have true grace or not. Hypocrites often make as fair a profession as real Christians; and when such fall in a course of gross sins, we are not rashly to conclude that *men may fall from grace*, as it is impossible for us to know whether such were ever *truly* and *really* gracious.

4. It is no objection against this doctrine, that some truly gracious persons have fallen into very gross sins; yea, into courses of sin, and thereby dishonored Christ, and their profession of his religion. The question is, whether truly gracious persons can ever *totally* and *finally* lose the principle of grace; *wholly* apostatize from God, and fall into reprobacy and condemnation?

5. Some have imagined, that the saints may fall *totally* from grace, but not *finally*; as in the instances of *David* and *Solomon*: But, though this would solve many difficulties, yet it does not seem to be the scripture doctrine.

6. If what we have said of *conversion* be true, it seems by no means probable, that GOD should regenerate men, and give them his Spirit, and wholly change their natures, and put his image on their souls, and yet, that either *they themselves*, or the *devil*, should be allowed to destroy and undo this glorious work, and wholly raze and blot out that image of his, which was engraved by his Spirit on their hearts !

7. If GOD, by an act of astonishing grace *justifies us* when *ungodly* ; if he also takes us out of the *devil's* family by *adoption*, and gives us the spirit and temper of sons, where by we are disposed and enabled to cry, *Abba, Father*, and to render a filial and dutiful obedience : Can we suppose him so capricious (with reverence be it spoken !) as to change his own free acts ; recal his gifts and favors ; condemn us again and cast us back to the family of the devil, from which he had but just taken us by a miracle of mercy ; especially when we are told that *his gifts and calling are without repentance*. *

8. If the doctrine of our *mystical union with Christ*, through faith and the indwelling influences of the Spirit, be true ; the perseverance of the saints in holiness, must follow of consequence : For, can we suppose that the mystical body of Christ can

* Psal. lxxxix. 28,—31. Rom. viii. 32,—39.

be mangled or dismembered ? That his members may be cut off and made members of the devil ? Or that our bodies may be one day *temples of the Holy Ghost*, and the next *synagogues of Satan*.

9. Is it not something very shocking and absurd to reason, to suppose, that the states of men God-ward should be liable to hourly change ; one hour justified persons, the next under sentence of condemnation ; one hour holy saints, the next profane reprobates ; one hour favorites of heaven, the next confederates with hell : The hour before death in a state of salvation, angels ready to guard and convey them to bliss ; an hour hence, the prey of devils, and conveyed by them to everlasting torments !

10. We do not say that the saints are infallible by any power of standing in themselves ; or that divine grace is a thing, which, in its own nature cannot be lost. We believe, that if believers were left to themselves, they would fall from grace every hour. But we found this doctrine wholly on the power and promise of God ; firmly believing, on the authority of his infallible word, “ That his gifts and calling
“ are without repentance ; and that all
“ who are begotten again to a lively hope,
“ thro’ the resurrection of Jesus Christ from
“ the dead, to an inheritance, incorrupti-
“ ble, undefiled, and that fadeth not away,

“ reserved in the heavens for them, SHALL
 “ BE KEPT BY THE POWER OF GOD,
 “ THRO’ FAITH UNTO SALVATION, ready
 “ to be revealed in the last times.”*

11. For the clear and superabundant scripture evidence of this doctrine, read with attention the scriptures referred to below in the margin.†

12. The scripture instances or examples alledged against this doctrine are either, (1.) Of *hypocritical professors*, or *mere temporary believers*, falling from an outward profession of religion, which we believe to be a very possible and common case. Or, (2.) Of the *casual* and *temporary* defections and falls of true saints, which we readily grant to be too frequent a case. Or, (3.) Of *conditional threatenings* made to true saints, as a means of, and excitement to their perseverance. And all these scripture instances which are commonly objected to this doctrine, may, without straining them, be reduced to one or other of these classes.

13. The principal objections alledged against this doctrine, from the nature and tendency of it, is, (1.) That it ministers to carnal confidence and security, and tends to

* 1 Pet. i. 3,—6.

† John x. 27,—29. —vi. 39, 40. —xvii. 11. 1 John ii. 19. —iii. 9. Eph. i. 13, 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19. —iv. 18. Matth. xxiv. 24. Rom. xi. 29. Isa. xlii. 3. —liiii. 11. 12. Phil. i. 6. Heb. vi. 17, 18. Jude i. Psal. xxii. 30. Isa. liv. 10. Jer. xxxi. 33, 34. Job. xvii. 9.

hinder that watchfulness and circumspection, that holy fear and trembling with which it becomes such guilty, imperfect creatures as we are, to work out our salvation: But, the very best of men, can have no ground of confidence, save in the strength and promise of God. We know also, that if we live not holily, watchfully and circumspectly, we have no true grace. These are the only certain and infallible signs and marks of true grace, and where these are wanting, it would be the most irrational and absurd presumption, to be confident of persevering in a grace which we have not. (2.) It is objected, that this doctrine renders admonitions and reproofs, vain and needless. But these are the very appointed means of our standing, and to prevent our apostacy and ruin. We can have no certainty of perseverance, but what arises from our certainty of the truth of grace, and this can be only ascertained by a ready and cheerful compliance with every gospel motive to universal holiness.

14. Few Christians *can* or *ought* to take any comfort from the application of this doctrine to themselves. None have any right to do so, but such as have the clearest and most satisfying evidences of the truth of grace in themselves. And how few real christians, comparatively speaking, have actually attained to this satisfying evidence of

the truth of grace, from which they may take the comfort of the doctrine of perseverance ?

15. Let it therefore be our first and principal care, to have true grace ; let it be our next to know that we have it, to make our calling and election sure and certain to ourselves ; and then let us freely rejoice in the immutability of the divine love ;—that his gifts and calling are without repentance ; that where he has once begun a good work, he will carry it on to the day of Christ Jesus, and that neither earth nor hell, shall be able to pluck us out of his hand, or out of his Father's hand. Amen.

ESSAY XV.

Of PEACE of CONSCIENCE.

1. CONSCIENCE is a comparing of our moral actions with their rule, and a practical judging of them by this rule ; the result of which is, that we either *acquit* or *condemn* ourselves, according to this evidence. When we acquit ourselves upon this practical judgment, then have we *peace of conscience*.

2. Peace of conscience is the *fruit* and *effect* of *sanctification* : For, it is impossible that an un sanctified, impenitent, graceless person, can, upon true evidence, ac-

quit himself at the bar of his own conscience; or, in other words, enjoy true peace of conscience.

3. In order to true peace of conscience, it is not enough that the matter of our actions be conformable to the law of God: We must also be conscious that they are done from *right motives* and for *right ends*; in obedience to the authority of God, with a view to his glory and the good of our fellow creatures, or for our own spiritual benefit.

4. It is one thing to be able to acquit ourselves of *some particular crime* falsely laid to our charge by men, which a very wicked person may be able to do; and quite another thing to be able to acquit ourselves, in our *general conduct*, in the sight of God. In order to *this peace*, we must labor to maintain the testimony of a good conscience, both *towards God* and *towards men*; or as the Apostle elsewhere expresses it, we must *have lived in all good conscience*. *

5. A good, *quiet* and *peaceable* conscience is one of the greatest blessings upon earth; one of the richest and most invaluable privileges of the sanctified; can be only obtained in the way of circumspect holiness, and should be pursued with the utmost assiduity by every Christian. Both

* Acts xxiii. 1. ——— xxiv. 16.

the nature of it, and an earnest resolution to pursue it, are well expressed in these words of *Job*: *My heart shall not reproach me, so long as I live.**

6. Two things are particularly necessary to peace of conscience: *First*, That *our sins are pardoned*, through faith in the Redeemer's blood: For, where guilt remains, there can be no ground for peace, and where a sense of guilt remains, no peace can actually take place.† *Secondly*, A *holy life*: For, *there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.‡*

7. The *pure and ravishing pleasures*, the *solid joys* and *extatic delights* of a peaceable conscience, are beautifully expressed by the Apostle; || “For this is our rejoicing, “even the testimony of our conscience, that “in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with “fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God “we have had our conversation in the “world.” And again; ¶ Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with “God, through our Lord Jesus Christ, and “rejoice in hope of the glory of God. “We glory in tribulations also; knowing “that tribulation worketh patience; and

* *Job* xxvii. 6. Read also, *1 John* iii. 19,—21. *1 Tim.* i. 5. *1 Pet.* iii. 19. *1 Tim.* iii. 9.

† *Heb.* ix. 11,—14. ——— *x.* 22.

‡ *Isa.* lvii. 21.

|| *2 Cor.* i. 12.

¶ *Rom.* v. 13,—4.

“patience, experience ; and experience,
 “hope ; and hope maketh not ashamed, be-
 “cause the love of God is shed abroad in our
 “hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given
 “unto us.”

8. The *horrors* of an *evil, guilty condemn-
 ing* conscience are, beyond compare, the
 most shocking miseries of this life ; and
 too certain preludes of that worm which
 dieth not, and that fire which is not quenched.
 Conscience is a lion, which will one
 day or other, rise up and tear to pieces,
 with resistless fury, the impenitent sinner.
 We have some instructive and alarming in-
 stances of these horrors of a guilty and a-
 wakened conscience, in the cases of *Cain*,
Judas and *Francis Spira*.

9. The dangerous and destructive coun-
 terfit of *peace of conscience*, is *security* or a
false and *ill-grounded* peace of mind, in a
 wilful course of sin. This arises either
 from false and unworthy notions of God's
 perfections, or from a long custom of sin-
 ning against light, whereby the conscience
 becomes as it were *seared* and *past feel-
 ing*.* But a piercing light will one day or
 other, discover this cheat to the sinner, and
 fill his soul with an anguish which he shall
 neither be able to support nor divert.

10. Let us labor to obtain an *enlighten-*

* Eph. iv. 18, 19.

ed, well informed conscience, that we may neither, on the one hand, become the dupes of superstitious fears, groundless panics, and imaginary terrors, for actions in which there is really no guilt; nor, on the other, like Saint Paul, bring guilt upon ourselves, by erring *ignorantly through unbelief*.*

11. Let us pray and labor for a *tender, sensible, faithful* conscience; lest we be given over to the dreadful soul-destroying judgment of *blindness of mind and hardness of heart*.

ESSAY XVI.

Of Joy in the HOLY GHOST.

1. **J**OY in the Holy Ghost, is a joy proceeding not merely from the testimony of a good conscience; but also from the cheering influences of the holy Spirit, the comforter, bearing witness with the comfortable testimony of our own spirits, shining upon the work of grace in our souls, and making it visible to ourselves; the consequence of which is, that we are filled with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

2. It is a direct fruit of the Spirit, not only as *sanctifying*, but as *comforting* :† It is the love of God shed abroad in our

* 1 Tim. i. 13.

† Gal. v. 22.

hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.*

3. This also is a privilege only of the *sanctified* : For, although the Holy Ghost operates on the hearts of the wicked, as a *renewer* and *sanctifier* ; yet he visits none as a *comforter*, shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, except such as are in a state of *pardon* and *reconciliation* with God, and as are *actually holy*.

4. If we would experience and enjoy within us, that spiritual kingdom of God, which consists in *righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost* ;† we must, by a *virtuous, watchful* and *circumspect* life, have our souls always prepared and adorned, as fit temples for the residence of the Holy Ghost : For, this joy does not seem to be essential to a sanctified state ; but seems rather to depend much on the manner in which we improve our talents, and entertain and cherish the motions and operations of the holy Spirit on our minds. It may be also, in many cases, a peculiar and sovereign favor conferred by God on some believers, who may best improve it to his glory, and the comfort and edification of others, on certain important occasions and emergencies.

5. As, therefore, we would expect this divine privilege, and taste this pure and

* Rom. v. 4.

† Rom. xiv. 17.

heavenly joy, let us be solicitously watchful over every movement of our hearts and affections, and labor after the utmost purity of soul.

6. Many poor christians are so far from enjoying these *luxuries of religion*, that through some peculiar infelicity of constitution or external circumstances, or from some other cause known only to God, they walk continually in darkness and see no light: Let not such, however, be overmuch distressed, provided they are but enabled to *trust in the LORD, and stay themselves upon their GOD.**

ESSAY XVII.

Whether CHRISTIANS may be fully assured of GOD'S eternal LOVE, in this LIFE?

1. **B***Y a full assurance of GOD'S love*, we mean, 'Such a firm and well-grounded persuasion of his love to us, of the truth of grace in us, and of the certainty of future glory and happiness, as excludes all doubts and fears, and as affords just ground of joy and triumph.' The Apostle terms it, *The full assurance of hope.†*

2. We do not suppose that *every believer* attains to this privilege; for, we do not

* Isa. l. 10

† Heb. vi. 11.

suppose that assurance is *of the essence of faith*. To *believe and trust* in Christ, is *one thing*, and to be *persuaded and assured* that we do believe and trust in him, agreeable to the gospel command is *another and a very different thing*: The *first* is a *direct*, the *second* a reflex act of faith: By the *first* we are actually in the way of salvation; by the *second* we know and are comfortably assured that we are so; and the *first may be* and often *is*, without the second.*

3. This comfortable assurance of God's eternal love is not, in its own nature *permanent*; but may be, and often is *lost for a time*, either through falls and miscarriages, or an unwatchful and uncircumspect life, or for other reasons and purposes known only to God. Nay, it may be doubted, whether any christian ever enjoyed this privilege uninterruptedly for many years, or even months together. Nor indeed is it necessary, as it is not essential to salvation. It is necessary to our salvation, that we should always trust in God; but it is not equally necessary, that we should always know that we do so.

4. God may have wise and gracious reasons for withholding this comfortable assurance wholly from some christians, and for interrupting it often in others; namely, to humble and preserve them from spiritual

* Isa. l. 10.

pride ; to chastise them for carelessness and unwatchfulness, and to exercise them in the graces of godly sorrow, repentance, patience, dependance, and a painful diligence in the work of religion.

5. Christians may also forfeit this comfortable assurance, by their miscarriages and indiscretions ; by grieving the holy Spirit and resisting his motions and impulses, and by neglecting the duties of meditation, self-examination, prayer, and the other instrumental ordinances of God's appointment.

6. But this assurance is a privilege certainly *attainable* by christians, because it has been *actually attained* by numbers of God's people. It appears that *Job*,* *David*,† *St. Paul* and all the other Apostles had this comfortable assurance.‡

7. It was one principal design of writing the scriptures, that we might come to this comfortable assurance, and we are repeatedly exhorted and commanded to seek for it and obtain it, which proves that it is attainable.¶

8. There are numberless conditional promises of salvation laid down in scripture,

* Job xix. 23.—27.

† 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. and his psalms passim.

‡ 2 Tim. i. 12.—iv. 7, 8. 2 Cor. iv. 17.—v. 1, 6, 7, 8. Phil. i. 19,—23. 1 John iii. 2, 3, &c.

¶ John xx. 31. 1 John i. 4.—v. 13. 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Gal. vi. 3, 4, &c.

the conditions whereof, if we can be persuaded that we have been enabled to fulfil them, we may be equally assured of *eternal life*, and that we are in a *state of salvation*. For instance; *he that believeth, repenteth, is converted and born of GOD, shall be saved.* “This is the record, that GOD hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his Son: He that hath the Son, hath life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not life; but the wrath of GOD abideth on him.” If, therefore, I have obtained a rational assurance, that I have *believed, or received the Son of GOD by faith*; that I have *repented, and am truly regenerated and born again of the Spirit*, I am equally assured of *eternal life*.

9. The scriptures abound with marks and characters of *true believers and real converts.* *E. g.* “This is the love of GOD, that ye keep his commandments. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace, &c. and they that are Christ’s, have crucified the flesh, with its lusts. There is, therefore, now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. To be spiritually minded is life and peace. As many as are led by the Spirit of GOD, they are the Sons of GOD.

“Every man, who hath this hope in himself, purifyeth himself, as GOD is pure, &c.” Now, if we are rationally and upon good grounds persuaded that we have these marks and characters, we may be equally assured of spiritual life in possession, and eternal life in reversion.

10. The witness of the Spirit may also concur with and shine upon this evidence, and give us an irresistible persuasion, that this is indeed our happy case.*

11. The following things seem necessary to this assurance : (1.) There must be *promises* of life and salvation revealed, as *objects* of our faith.—(2.) There must be *marks* and *characters* revealed, as a *rule* whereby we may examine and try ourselves, and know our state.—(3.) These marks and evidences of grace must be *discovered*, in an ordinary way, by frequent, diligent, and impartial *self-examination*, which is the only rational expedient on our part to come at *self-knowledge*.—(4.) It is necessary, that we should *discern in ourselves* these marks and evidences, to which the promises of salvation are made : And, (5.) In order to remove all doubt and uncertainty, it seems necessary, in most cases, that the Spirit should shine upon his own work, and give his *concurring testimony* ; and for this we should earnestly pray, while we examine.

* Rom. v. 1,—5.—viii. 15,—17.

12. There is an *extraordinary witness of the Spirit*, which seems distinct from this, and which is much more rare and uncommon ; wherein, without any self-examination, reflecting or reasoning, the Spirit of GOD *immediately shines on the soul*, with such an irresistible and overpowering light, and with such sensible first-fruits of heavenly glory, as puts the persons thus highly favored, infinitely above all doubt of the safety of their state. This often happens to *eminently holy men*, upon the near approach of death.

13. The very lowest degree of this assurance is not to be expected without *true faith*, and a conscientious regard to GOD's commandments, accompanied with self-examination, and careful, serious reflections on our temper, frame and actions, compared with the word of GOD.

14. It is the duty of every christian, to labor to obtain this comfortable assurance of the safety and happiness of his state, for the following reasons : (1.) Without it he can have no rational hope, or joy in the Holy Ghost. (2.) He cannot, with truth and sincerity, bear an honorable testimony to religion, or encourage and comfort others from his own experience. (3.) He cannot praise GOD or rejoice in him, as he ought ; nor be so cheerful in his service, or so exemplary in his own life, as he otherwise

might. (4.) His death cannot be honorable to christianity, nor edifying to saints or sinners ; as he must go down to the grave, in a state of doubt and hesitancy.

15. To obtain this comfortable assurance, is, for ordinary, a work which requires much labor, diligence and perseverance ; but when obtained, it will abundantly recompence the labor of a whole lifetime.

ESSAY XVIII.

The IMMORTALITY of the SOUL.

I. **T**HE doctrine of the soul's immortality is of great importance in religion : For, if the soul perished with the body, *self-denial, mortification, and extreme sufferings* in the cause of virtue, would be *absurd* ;—and the best christians would, as the Apostle suggests, be of all men the most miserable.

2. By the soul's being *immortal*, we do not mean that it is impossible for him who made it to destroy it ; or that it is, in its own nature, immortal, independently on God ; but that it doth not perish or die with, or like the body, nor can be destroyed by any creature ; but is appointed by God for an endless existence, and fitted and qualified for this deathless existence in its own nature.

3. Reason does not assure us, that *thought* and *consciousness* are *inseparable* and *essential* properties of human souls: For aught we know, they may be, and exist without continued thought, consciousness and reflection, though the contrary opinion is highly probable, and seems to be countenanced by scripture.

4. We know of but two kinds of substances in the universe, *matter* and *spirit*. And these we conceive of as entirely different and distinct from one another. God, we are sure, is a *pure spirit*; *immaterial*, *without body* or *bodily parts*: But we are not equally certain that created spirits, either *angels* or *human souls*, are spirits of the same nature with God, or *wholly immaterial*. Though their being called *spirits*, and being said to be made after the image of God, and to be *his offspring*, is a *strong presumption* that they are *immaterial*.

5. If it could be certainly proved that our souls are wholly immaterial, as God is, it would be a strong argument in favor of their immortality: Because, it would hence follow, that they are *incapable of dissolution*; that they could not perish with the body, and that none but God could destroy them. But we have abundant arguments to prove the *soul's immortality*, laying aside the consideration of its being *immaterial*.

6. There is much the same reason to believe the *spirits of brutes* to be *immaterial*, as the *souls of men*. Both are called *spirits* in the scripture; though it is said, that the one *goeth upward* at death, and the other *downwards*. And it is as difficult to conceive how a *merely material* substance should *perceive, reason, remember, compare, love and hate* in a *beast*, more than in a *man*. Yet there are not the same reasons to believe the immortality of the spirits of beasts, as of the souls of men.

7. The strongest and most conclusive arguments for the *immortality of human souls*, are of a *moral nature*, and do not arise from their being *immaterial*: For, although we know our bodies to be material, yet we have sufficient reason to believe, that they shall be raised from the dead, and rendered immortal in a future state. And if we have reason to believe this of our mortal bodies, why may we not believe the same of our souls, even supposing them to be material.

8. There is a great apparent resemblance between men and brutes in many respects, both *living* and *dying*. They seem to have much the same natural perceptions of pleasure and pain. All the brute creation seem to have some portion of reason, fore-thought, contrivance and memory. So that it is hard to conceive

an essential difference between the souls of men and the spirits of beasts ; only, that the former appear to be a more perfect kind of spirits. Yet there are many *great* and *essential* differences between men and beasts, which lay a foundation for believing the souls of men to be *immortal*, whereas the spirits of beasts may be *mortal* and *perishable* at their death.

9. The souls of men have plainly a *capacity for virtue and religion*. It is evident that they have a *conscience*, a *moral sense* and *feeling*, a *divine law* written upon them ; that they have hopes and fears, relating to invisible powers, and a future and invisible state. They have naturally *hope* and *joy*, when they are conscious of having acted up to the moral law of their nature ; and *fears* and *forebodings* of punishment, when they grossly violate the laws of their own minds. In other words ; it appears, that they are *moral agents*, *accountable creatures*, under law to God ; and that they know they are responsible to him for their moral actions. But there is not the least evidence or appearance of this among the brute creation. Now if God has implanted *this law*, *this moral sense*, *these hopes and fears* in human souls, as the law of their nature ; is it to be thought, that they are vain and false, and have no real objects ?

10. The spirits of brutes do not seem capable of improvement: Whatever they *know* and *do* seems to be by *instinct*. The bird builds her nest as ingeniously the *first year*, without any instruction, as she does after the experience of *ten years*; and knows her food, her enemies and resources as well. But the soul of man is capable of daily improvement, not only in *virtue*, but in the *knowledge of arts and sciences*. Is it not likely then, that *human souls* are made for *noble ends*, and for *higher enjoyments*, even for an *immortal, ever improving duration*?

11. The generality of men of all nations, even the most ignorant and barbarous, have believed the immortality of the soul, and this universal belief, must be supposed founded on *some obvious principles*, level to the capacity of all, which is a strong presumption that it is *true and founded in nature*.

12. Men in general have a *strong desire*, and a fond hope of immortality; and the more virtuous and holy they are, the more earnest is this hope and desire of immortality: But would a *good God* provide gratifications for all the natural desires of the lowest order of creatures, and leave this noblest appetite in man ungratified?—or would he inspire the *holiest and best of men* with *pantings, breath-*

ings and earnest longings, which are vain, imaginary and delusive?

13. It seems not consistent with the divine goodness to form so excellent a creature as man, for so short a *duration* and such *low employments*, as are to be met with in this life. Is it reasonable to imagine, that the human soul, by the time its noble faculties just begin to be cultivated and fitted for noble pleasures and enjoyments, should be extinguished and cut off for ever?

14. Good men desire nothing so much as to enjoy God more perfectly than they can in their life; and the more they love God, the more eager and unsatisfied is this desire in their souls. Nay, this desire, is the fruit of God's grace in them, and of his own planting. But if the human soul is not immortal, the best of men, can never obtain their *noblest desire*, and the *highest enjoyment and happiness* of which their nature is capable.

15. If the soul were mortal, a desperate villain might deprive the most virtuous man of *his being*, and of all the future rewards of his virtue: But is it consistent with the justice and goodness of God, that this should be in the power of a bad man?

16. If God is a just governor of his rational creatures, the *virtuous must and will* be rewarded according to their works.

and the *wicked* punished according to theirs : But we are sure this does not always happen in the present life ; therefore, there must be a *future state* of retribution, and consequently human souls are immortal.

17. Our Lord Jesus Christ has put this doctrine beyond all doubt, having brought life and immortality to light by his gospel. The whole of his religion ; all his threatenings and promises, his rewards and punishments, go upon this supposition, and all his discourses and parables are full of it.

18. Christ's raising the dead bodies of many, and rising himself from the dead ; also, the appearance of *Moses* and *Elias* to the disciples on the *mount of transfiguration*, were so many ocular demonstrations of the immortality of the soul, and that its existence depends not on the life of the body.

19. It is no objection to this important doctrine, that the faculties of the souls of *aged* or *sick persons* are *impaired* and *enfeebled* by the diseases and decays of the body ; seeing the soul must exert its faculties *by* and *through* the bodily organs. On the contrary also, the souls of some men are uncommonly active and vigorous when their bodies are in the deepest decays, and just at the point of death.

20. If our souls are indeed immortal, and must live for ever happy or miserable, is

there any care or concern in this life a thousandth part so important to man, as to provide for the future happiness of his immortal soul?

ESSAY XIX.

Of DEATH.

1. **T**HOUGH we can hardly conceive of the *natural immortality* of a body composed of *flesh and blood*; yet God could doubtless have made our bodies immortal, if he had so pleased. And had we continued in a state of innocence, there is no doubt but that we would have been immortal; for this seems implied in the promise of the covenant of works.

2. Whether this reward and privilege of innocent man, would have been an immortality on earth or in heaven, is no where plainly revealed.

3. Though man was *naturally mortal*; yet God could have preserved him from death, by the salubrity of the air and water, the wholesome, restorative and medicinal quality of the fruits of the earth, and that composure and equability of the passions and affections, resulting from the innocence and perfection of the soul.

4. Some have supposed, that the *tree of life*, from which man was excluded by sin, had,

in its fruit, the *preternatural quality* of preserving man immortal, so long as he had access to eat it : Others, that it was a *sacramental pledge* of his immortality so long as he continued in a state of innocence.

5. However these things may be, yet we are assured both from scripture and experience, that *fallen, sinful man, is mortal* ; that death is the *wages* and *consequent* of *sin* in all the race ; and that death hath passed upon *all*, because *all have sinned*.*

6. As death is the *wages of sin*, and by the unalterable purpose of God, all men are doomed to die ; so a great many *second causes* may have concurred to secure the accomplishment of this purpose ; as the curse of the earth, poisoning its fruits with the seeds of death ; the baneful influences of the accursed air upon our lungs and juices ; the intemperature of the seasons, and the quick successions from wet to dry, and from extreme heat to extreme cold ; the exorbitancy and irregularity of our passions and appetites through sin ; the sickly and enfeebled constitutions of our forefathers, and the like.

7. With regard to beasts, we suppose death to put a period to their pains, pleasures and very beings. But, as it is attended with some degree of pain, and deprives

* Gen. ii. 17. Rom. v. 12. Job xxi. 23. Heb. ix. 27.

these creatures of being, and many pleasurable enjoyments, religion and even humanity should restrain us from giving them unnecessary pain, and much more from taking away their lives, where necessity, or the law of self-preservation, does not require it.

8. With regard to man, *death* in itself considered, or the *mere separation of soul and body*, ought not to be greatly dreaded, as probably the pain of it is much smaller than we imagine: But what renders death peculiarly important and formidable to man, is its *awful consequences*. "It is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment."

9. "The sting of death is sin." A consciousness of guilt, of exposedness to an impartial judgment, eternal banishment from God, and the positive inflictions of his wrath, render death extremely formidable to the *wicked*, as it must be to *such*, the period of all their pleasurable enjoyments, and the commencement of eternal misery.

10. Even nature, in good men, has an abhorrence of death, in itself considered, as we may learn from the Apostle himself; * because, say some, death is *unnatural*, being no part of the original constitution, but an *adventitious* consequent upon sin, and

* 2 Cor. v. 2.

part of the punishment of it. But many other reasons may be assigned for this, such as the natural fear of the pain of dying, our unacquaintedness with the separate state and invisible world, and remaining doubts of their unpreparedness, with many. Besides, the soul and body, who have been long such close and intimate companions, must naturally have a reluctance to part from each other, though but for a season.

11. It is the peculiar privilege of the *righteous*, that death will redound to their unspeakable advantage.—*Death is theirs*, as the Apostle emphatically expresses it.* *To them to die, is gain.*†

(1.) The sting of death is taken away, in their justification: For, after rational evidence, that a person is pardoned, and restored to the favor of God, there is no more rational ground for the *fear of death*; as that *sense of guilt* and *fear of punishment* which are the sting of death, are taken away, and such a person has ground for that triumphant exultation; “O death, “where is thy sting! O grave, where is “thy victory!”‡

(2.) Death changes its nature to the righteous, and, of an *enemy* becomes a *friend*. The *king of terrors* is changed into a *messenger of divine love*: As, *first*, it frees

* 1 Cor. iii. 22.

† Phil. i. 20.

‡ 1 Cor. xv.

them from all misery, and from the remainder of indwelling corruption. It ends the mortal strife and conflict, and gives them a complete victory and triumph over every enemy. *Secondly*, it fits and qualifies them for farther and higher communion with Christ in glory. When they are *absent from the body*, they are *present with the Lord*; see him face to face, and enjoy him perfectly without a *medium*. It enlarges and qualifies the soul for more perfect communion with, and the more perfect enjoyment of God, *Christ, angels and blessed spirits*. And, as *flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven*, it prepares the body for putting on a spiritual and immortal form without which it could not be fitted for heaven.

12. The change of those who shall be alive at the resurrection and second coming of Christ, will be equivalent to death: there appearing no reason why such should be privileged above their fellow creatures.

13. The translation of *Enoch* and *Elijah*, are the only two exceptions from the universal mortality of the human kind; and perhaps were intended as demonstrative proofs of an unseen world.

14. Though death will be certain gain to the righteous; yet a longer continuance in the present life may be beneficial to many of them, and answer great and important

purposes in the scheme of providence : Wherefore, an absolute and impatient desire of death, or peremptory prayers for it, are not commendable in good men ; but all lawful means to preserve and prolong life ought to be used by them.*

INFERENCES. 1. How ought a sense of universal mortality to *bumble* the *pride of man* ; and especially that arising from *birth, honor, power, wealth, riches* and *nobility* ? We have surely no reason to be vain or proud of any thing, of which death can rob us.

2. How *vain* and *ridiculous*, yea, and *unhappy* a thing would man be, if he were wholly under the dominion of death, and had no claim to immortality ?

3. From the consideration of death, the greatest of all natural evils, and from its *universality*, we may infer the great evil of sin, from which it took its rise.

4. From the shortness and uncertainty of life, and the importance of it, as a state of probation for eternity, we should learn the importance of improving our time, and the great guilt and folly of lavishing and squandering it in foolish and vain, and much more in sinful amusements and pleasures.†

5. If death be so important in its consequences, how dreadful a thing is murder ?

* Philip. i. 21,—26.

† Psal. xc. 12.—xxxix. 4, 5.

and how cautious and circumspect ought judges and juries to be in matters of life and death ?

6. How desperately mad is the wretch who is accessory to his own death, by which, he not only deprives himself and the world of all the benefits and advantages of his life, but plunges into an awful eternity, under all the irremissible guilt of suicide.

ESSAY XX.

The RESURRECTION of the DEAD.

1. **T**HIS is a doctrine of *pure revelation*, seeing there is no principle or appearance in nature, from whence it can be rationally inferred.

2. The instance of a grain of corn dying in the earth before it springs, and like instances, are good *illustrations* of the doctrine already revealed, and shew that the thing is neither *impossible* nor *absurd*; but cannot prove it.

3. Though it appears from many passages of the Old Testament scriptures, that this doctrine was believed by the Old Testament saints ;* yet the *full, clear* and *cir-*

* See 1 Sam. ii. 6. 2 Kings iv. 35.—xiii. 21.—xvii. 21. 22. Psal. xvi. 10. Isa. xxv. 8. Hos. xiii. 14. Compare 1 Cor. xv. 54, 55. Luke xx. 37, 38. Compare Exod. iii. 6. Job xix. 25,—27. Dan. xii. 2. Heb. xi.

cumstantial revelation of it was reserved to be brought to light by the gospel. Christ raised three dead bodies in the course of his ministry, and raised himself. He terms himself *the resurrection and the life* ; * and declares, that he is commissioned by God to raise up all his people at the last day. † See this doctrine established from the resurrection of Christ, and beautifully explained, 1 Cor. xv.

4. The bodies both of the *righteous* and the *wicked* shall be raised : ‡ For, as the body has been a partner with the soul in this state of probation, it seems equitable, that it should share with it in a state of retribution.

5. The resurrection body will be the *same in substance* with that which died, but will have *far different qualities*, suited to the state and place of retribution : For, flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven ; neither is it conceivable that they should long endure the torments of hell, unconsumed, without a perpetual miracle. The bodies of the saints will be raised *spiritual, incorruptible, and glorious*, like the glorified body of Christ ; and probably those of the wicked, *spiritual and incorruptible*, but *hideous and deformed*.

* John xi.

† John vi. 39, 49.

‡ Matth. xxv. 31, &c. Rev. xx. 12, 13. Matth. x. 28. Luke xii. 23.

6. The objections raised against the resurrection of the *same body*, are so futile, when we consider the power and wisdom of God, and the true nature of things, as not to deserve a serious answer.

7. The bodies of those who shall be found alive on the earth at the last day, shall be instantaneously changed; in which change there will be the nature and essence both of a death, and a resurrection.

ESSAY XXI.

Of a FUTURE JUDGMENT.

1. **I**T is appointed for all men once to die, and after that the judgment, Heb. ix. 27.

2. Many of the arguments for the immortality of the soul, equally prove a judgment to come; such as the *moral agency* and *accountableness* of man; the operations of his conscience and moral sense; his unaccountable *hopes* and *fears* respecting an invisible power and a future state; the unequal distribution of rewards and punishments according to men's moral characters in this present state, and the like.

3. It is remarkable also, that a belief of a judgment to come, and a future state of rewards and punishments, according to men's present behavior, has been as *universal*, as

the belief of the soul's immortality ; and is indeed grounded on the same general principles.

4. The holy scriptures *fully, clearly, and circumstantially* establish and teach this doctrine.*

5. GOD will judge the world by *Jesus Christ*, by whom he *made* and *governs* it, and by whom he has redeemed it. There is a great and evident propriety in this, from many reasons too tedious here to mention. This also tends powerfully to prove the *real divinity* and *infinite perfection* of our Redeemer.†

6. Christ at the day of judgment, will descend from heaven, in visible pomp and splendor inexpressible ; clothed with his own glory, his Father's glory, and attended with all the shining retinue of heaven ;—will seat himself on a glorious white throne in the lower heavens, and having summoned before him, the whole rational creation, *angels, men, and devils*, will judge and sentence them according to their respective works and characters.‡

7. The important consequence of this judgment is, that the righteous will immediately enter into a state of *endless happiness*,

* See Jude 14. and Eccles. xii. 14. Matth. xxv. Rev. xii. and xxii, &c.

† Acts xvii. 31. 2 Cor. v. 10, &c.

‡ Luke ix. 26. Matth. xxv. 31. 1 Thes. iv. 15. 2 Thes. i. 7,—10. 2 Pet. ii. 4. Jude 6, 14, 15. Rev. xxi. 11, 12. —xxii. 12. 2 Cor. v. 10.

and the wicked into a state of *endless misery*, in consequence of the public sentence then passed upon them by the judge.*

8. As we hear of but *one judgment*, it does not appear that the souls of men, are immediately judged at their departure from the body; although it is *certain* they are then made to *know* and *expect* their final doom, and do enter immediately into some degree of happiness or misery according to their respective characters.†

ESSAY XXII.

HEAVEN; or the FUTURE STATE of the
BLESSED.

1. **W**E have already supposed, that the souls of the righteous, during the whole intermediate state, from the article of death, to the day of judgment, are in a *place* and *state* of blessedness,—called in scripture *Paradise*, *Abraham's bosom*, *heaven*, and the like; though it is uncertain, whether this be the same place and state into which they will enter after the final judgment.

2. Though the sight of their descending Redeemer, and their being placed on his right hand before the judgment seat, will fill

* Matth. xxv. 34, 41, 46.

† Luke vi. 21,—23.—xxiii. 43. Rev. vi. 9, 10.

the righteous with inexpressible joy; yet the sentence passed on them after judgment, "Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom," &c.—may be properly deemed the *first part* of their *public triumph*; and of the *honor* conferred upon them before the assembled world: This being the *first declaration* of their title to the eternal joys of their Lord, in consequence of their judgment and acquittance.

3. They will then go away with Christ and the holy angels into *life eternal*, where they will ever be with each other, and with their dearest Lord.*

4. We must consider heaven both as a *place* and a *state* of blessedness; but *where* this place or what this state precisely is, we are not at present permitted to know.

5. As Christ has, and the saints will have *glorious bodies*, there must needs be a *local heaven*, or *some place* where these bodies will *be* and *reside*. But whether the whole universe may not be turned into a heaven to them; or whether any particular part of it may be appropriated for their peculiar residence, is what we cannot certainly tell. True, the heaven of the saints is termed a *city*, the *New Jerusalem*, *mansions in God's house*, *sure habitations*, and the like; but for all we know, these may be only *figurative expressions*. God may

* Matth. xxv. 46.

create a heaven around his saints wherever they are, even in hell ; and they may have intimate communion with each other, from the most distant parts of the universe. The *angels* always behold the face of GOD in heaven, and yet they are represented as ministering to the saints on earth. Wherever GOD graciously communicates himself to his rational creatures, there is heaven : and, as GOD is immense and infinite, his creatures can no where be out of his immediate presence.

6. Heaven, wherever it is, must be a *glorious place* adorned with every thing that can gratify and delight the refined and heavenly senses of glorified and spiritualized bodies ; and as, in our perfect glorious state, we may have a great many *more* and *different* senses and *capacities*, than what we have at present, and all these may have their proper and adapted gratifications ; therefore, it is impossible for us to conceive at present any thing of the glory and happiness of that place, which *eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, &c.**

7. But we can at present conceive something of the *heavenly state*, as a state of *perfect holiness*, exempt from all sin and misery ; and indeed, good men enjoy something of heaven in this sense of the word, or have some foretastes or prelibations of it in their souls, in this life.

* 1 Cor. ii. 9.

8. Heaven is a state of *improved knowledge* and *perfect holiness*. The glorified saints do *see* and *know* God *intuitively*, in his own nature, and in a spiritual manner, as one spirit may be supposed to see and know another. They also have a clear discernment of the wisdom and contrivance of his works, and of the holiness, justice and equity of his ways and providences; which is a kind and degree of knowledge we cannot attain to in this life, and which must afford inexpressible happiness to the mind, by delightfully gratifying its noblest powers. The righteous in heaven are also *altogether holy*; have no propensity to sin; no struggles with corruption; no conflict with temptation; no remorse for guilt, nor any fear of displeasing God, or enduring his displeasure. They *clearly see* and *know* God, and therefore they perfectly *love* and *admire* him. They know the equity of his laws and the beauty of holiness, and therefore they cannot but delightfully obey him and work holiness, and can be in no danger of inclining to the hateful ways of sin. Besides, enjoying so glorious a reward of holiness, and seeing sin so dreadfully punished in the damned, they are everlastingly guarded against the love of sin in the most powerful manner imaginable.

9. As God is the perfection of beauty, and the source of all blessedness and comfort,

so the highest part of our heavenly blessedness will consist in the *contemplation* and *enjoyment* of him. In *knowing him*, we shall *know all truth*, and in *enjoying him* we shall *enjoy all good and happiness*; for there is neither *truth* nor *happiness* but *in and from him*; so that he must ever be the *supreme good* and *chief portion* of our souls: Besides, that the knowledge and enjoyment of God are *transforming* and *assimilating*; so that to *know* and *enjoy him*, is to *be like him*; and to *be like him* in our measure, is to be *as holy, happy and glorious*, as our nature will admit.*

10. The presence and enjoyment of Christ and of the Holy Ghost, will also be prime ingredients in our heavenly blessedness. Indeed, in enjoying *them*, we enjoy GOD.†

11. Nor need we scruple to suppose, that the sweet fellowship and communion of *angels* and *saints*, more especially those whom we have *known* and *loved* on earth, will be ingredients in our heavenly blessedness.

“ But ye are come unto mount Sion, and
 “ unto the city of the living GOD, the hea-
 “ venly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable
 “ company of angels; to the general assem-
 “ bly and church of the first-born, which
 “ are written in heaven, and to GOD the
 “ judge of all, and to the spirits of just men

* 1 John iii. 2.

† 1 Thes. iv. 17, 18. Phil. i. 23. 2 Cor. v. 5,—8.

“made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator
 “of the new covenant, and to the blood of
 “sprinkling, that speaketh better things
 “than that of Abel.”*

12. The happiness of the righteous will be *eternal*.

13. It shall also, in all probability, be *ever improving*, as they grow in knowledge and holiness.

14. It is highly probable, that there will be different degrees of glory in heaven, according to the different degrees of holiness among GOD's children on earth.†

15. We should now have our conversation in heaven, and be preparing for that blessed place and state : For, how sad a case will it be, if we are describing that blessedness which we shall never enjoy, nor even see, but at an unapproachable distance, as the rich man did *Lazarus*, through the impassable gulph.

ESSAY XXIII.

Of HELL or the PLACE and STATE of the WICKED.

1. **A**LTHOUGH the wicked carry hell in their consciences from the moment of their death, and are probably doomed to

* See Heb. xii. 22, &c.

† 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. Matth. xxy. 14.

herd among the devils, and to share in their present punishments ; yet their rising from their graves in *terror* and *deformity* ; their ranking themselves on the left hand of the judge, and more especially their receiving that awful sentence ; “ Depart from me ye
 “ cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for
 “ the devil and his angels,” may be reckoned the beginning of their *hell*, or *eternal torments*.*

2. Hell is both a *place* and a *state*. The *place* or *locality* of hell cannot be doubted after the resurrection, as the bodies of the wicked must needs be in some place. Besides, the scriptures represent it as “ a lake
 “ of fire and brimstone ; a fire prepared for
 “ the devil and his angels,” and the like : —and *Dives* is represented as lifting up his eyes, being in torments ; and an *impassable gulph* is said to be fixed between him and *Lazarus*. But whether the souls of the wicked are now, in their intermediate state, confined to any such place, is a question not easy or needful to be answered. Some think, that they and the devils are suffered to roam at large through the universe. Let it suffice us to know, that wherever they are, it is hell with them. They are under a painful sense of the divine displeasure, and have a dreadful expectation of the judgment, and of greater miseries yet to come.

* Matth. xxv. 41, &c.

3. There have been many vain speculations about the *place* and *nature* of hell's torments. Some have thought it absurd to suppose, that the positive torments of damned spirits, of the devil and his angels, should be excited by *material fire*. But if we consider, that it is our *spirits* which feel the pain of burning through our bodies, we shall not think it incredible, that God should excite the same idea of pain from fire in *pure spirits* without the intervention of bodies. However, fire may be only *figuratively* used, to signify the most intense pain and torments. And as for the *place* of the damned, it better becomes us to endeavor to shun it, than curiously to enquire *where* or *what* it is.

4. At the resurrection of the wicked, their souls being united to their bodies, they shall be judged; and that awful sentence being passed upon them, "Depart
"from me ye cursed," &c. they shall be dragged away by devils, and with them, shut up in the prison of hell; thus sharing in the punishment of those with whom they apostatized.

5. It appears from scripture, that the misery of the damned will be *properly eternal, everlasting fire*; a *worm that dieth not*, and a *fire that is not quenched*. It appears agreeable to reason also, that creatures who have despised and rejected an

everlasting heaven of blessedness, should have *an everlasting hell of misery*; and that those who have slighted the glorious hope set before them, should inherit endless despair, which, indeed, upon the whole, was *their own choice and preference*.

6. As to the *state of hell*, or rather of *the damned*, it arises in a great measure from their own wicked and hellish dispositions, which cannot admit of happiness, but are naturally productive of misery. A wicked man is, and must be *a hell to himself*. He is *self-fitted*, and *prepared to this destruction*; and he needs only to be out of the body, and out of a capacity of tasting God's goodness to be in *hell*, and to be equally a *devil*. So that repentance of sin, and holiness, are in their own nature, necessary to deliver men from hell, and to qualify them for happiness.

7. The chief ingredients in the miseries of the damned, are, (1.) Their being banished from the presence and enjoyment of God, the fountain of happiness:—(2.) The society of *devils* and other damned spirits, who will be continually upbraiding them, and exciting their hellish passions:—(3.) A remembrance of the good things of this life which they have lost, and a sense of their desperate madness in rejecting that eternal blessedness which they might have enjoyed, for the merest trifles:—(4.) En-

vy at the happiness of the blessed :—(5.) A painful sense of God's wrath, and the infliction of positive torments from the presence of the Lord, and the glory of his power ;—and *finally*, despair of ever seeing an end of their misery—with, perhaps—a continual increase and aggravation of it, from their increasing wickedness and guilt.

8. If any thing can awaken our fears, surely it ought to be a dread of our falling into this place of torment.*

ESSAY XXIV.

What, as CHRISTIANS, we ought to do more than others, from Matth. v. 47.

THE others mentioned here, are *publicans* and *sinner*s, and imply all the *wicked* and *profane*, and all *hypocrites* and *formal*, insincere professors of religion : And it is plainly supposed, that the true and sincere disciples of Christ, who hope for salvation through faith in him and obedience to his gospel, must do much more, and go much farther in the duties of religion and sound morality, than these. The following may serve as a few illustrations of this observation.

1. Others, even *publicans* and *sinner*s, may and do love those that love them : But we must love and wish well to our enemies ; pray for them and do them good.

* Luke xii. 4, 5.

2. Others *may* and *do* take some care of the decency of their outward behavior, that they may be acceptable before men: but we must watch over the most hidden movements, thoughts and desires of our hearts; —labor to approve ourselves to the eye of GOD, and to keep consciences, as well as appearances, void of offence both towards GOD and man.

3. Others will *sometimes* mind religion when they have nothing else to do, either for their worldly pleasure or profit: But we must make religion the *principal leading* business of our lives, to which all things must give way.

4. Others perform the duties of religion, as a *disagreeable task*, either to stand fair in the opinion of men or to satisfy the importunate demands of conscience: But we must *delight* and *rejoice* in them, as our most sweet and pleasurable enjoyments.

5. Others are ever contriving *how little* they may do in religion, in order to shun hell: But we must be ambitious to *abound in good works*, that we may the more please and honor GOD, and enjoy a greater measure of his likeness and favor.

6. Others, walking by sight and sense, take up their rest and portion in the things and enjoyments of this world; ever anxiously enquiring who will shew them any earthly good: —But, living and walking by

the faith of unseen things, we must make God our *only portion* and *inheritance*, seeking and delighting in the uplifting of his countenance, and the manifestation of his reconciled favor.

7. Others are most curious in knowing and studying the characters and concerns of their neighbors : But we must be most diligent in the study and knowledge of ourselves and of *our own proper concerns*.

8. Others are indulgent and favorable to themselves and their own failings, while they are severe and unmerciful observers and censurers of the sins and failings of their neighbors : But we must be *severe to ourselves*, and *charitable* in our judgment of *others*, *hoping all things* and *believing all things* in favor of our neighbor.

9. Others, even *publicans* and *sinner*s, may and do often attend the duties of public religion : But, we must also be found conscientious in the religion of the *family* and *closet* ; in the duties of *private* and *secret* devotion.

10. Others perform *some duties*, and deny *some sins* : But we must be governed throughout by a principle of *uniform obedience* ; hating every false way, and having an equal respect to all God's commandments, as *holy*, *just* and *good*.

11. Others square their religion by the fashion and custom of the places where they

live : But ours must be *unfashionably singular* in this respect, being wholly measured by the law of God, which is the only rule and model of our obedience.

12. Others are discouraged and disheartened from duty by the reproaches and persecutions of the wicked : But we must learn to *glory in the cross*, and to *rejoice in sufferings and persecutions* for the sake of Christ.

13. Others will *sin* rather than *suffer* : But we must *suffer* rather than *sin*.

14. Others render evil for evil, and railing for railing : But if we would be the true disciples of Christ, we must render *good for evil*, after the most amiable and perfect example of him, who, “when he “was reviled, reviled not again : when he “suffered, threatened not ; but committed “himself to him that judgeth righteously.”*

15. Others are indulgent to their *favorite sins* and *beloved lusts* : But we must be particularly severe against *these*, *plucking out the right eye*, and *cutting off the right hand*.

16. Others love their flatterers : But we must love our well designing reprovers.

17. Others accept of Christ as a *Saviour from hell* : But we must also accept him as a *Saviour from sin* ; embracing him in all his offices, as a *king* to rule us, and a *pro-*

* 1 Pet. ii. 23.

phet to teach us, as well as a *priest* to offer himself an atonement, and intercede for us.

18. Others are for a *cheap* and *easy* religion which costs them little labor or self-denial : But we must choose a self-denying religion ; a *painful, diligent, laborious* course in the service of GOD.

ESSAY XXV.

Of HEAVENLY-MINDEDNESS, and the contrary VICES.

1. **H**EAVENLY-MINDEDNESS is a very comprehensive virtue, and essentially necessary to every Christian. It consists in the prevailing bent and tendency of the mind and heart towards GOD, and the things of GOD and heaven ; and is directly opposed to *worldly-mindedness, earthly-mindedness, covetousness and sensuality.*

2. Heavenly-mindedness necessarily presupposes *regeneration, conversion*, a change of mind and heart by renewing grace, or a sanctified nature in some degree at least ; for every man, by nature, is *earthly, sensual devilish*, not having the Spirit of GOD ;—seeing that that which is born of the flesh is and *must be* flesh ;—and seeing that the *natural* and *unrenewed* mind, is *enmity against GOD.*

3. Heavenly-mindedness will principally shew itself in the following instances :

(1.) In a supreme regard to GOD above the creature. The heavenly-minded man loves GOD and the Saviour, although unseen, above all things in this world, by means of that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and the substance of things hoped for. No object of sight or sense so strongly moves the noblest affections of his soul, or so powerfully elicits and draws forth his desires, as an invisible GOD, and an exalted Redeemer, whom having not seen, he loves, and in whom, although now he sees them not, he yet rejoices with joy unspeakable and full of glory.* Tell the heavenly-minded man of enjoying riches, power, pomp or honor ;—recount to him the various gratifications and pleasures of sense—of women, wine, luxurious and delicate living ;—place his affections to all these, and desires of enjoying them, over against his love of an unseen GOD and Saviour, and his desire of enjoying them ;—put it to his choice, and he will despise the *former*, in comparison.†

(2.) The heavenly-minded man sees and enjoys GOD in his *works* and *providences*. His mind is turned to a contemplation of GOD in his vast and wonderful works. In

* 1 Pet. i. 8.

† Psal. iv. 6, 7.—xlii. 1, 4.—lixii. 1, &c.—lxxiii. 25.

these he has a deep and affecting conviction of the power, wisdom and goodness of him who made them all. He tastes the goodness of GOD in every enjoyment of sense; in every pleasure and refreshment. He eyes and enjoys GOD in every dispensation of providence. He receives every mercy as the gift of GOD, and a fresh obligation to gratitude, love and praise; and hears the voice of GOD in every affliction, reproving, chastening and calling him home from sin, or quickening him to the performance of some long-neglected duty.

(3.) The heavenly-minded man, converses with, and enjoys GOD, in his *word* and *ordinances*. He reads the scriptures diligently, with correspondent holy affections; with gratitude and spiritual desire and appetite. He hears GOD speaking to his soul in them; trembles at his word; delights in the purity of his laws, humbly submits to their authority, and feeds pleasurably upon his promises and offers of mercy. He frequents ordinances, with no other view than to *glorify* and *enjoy* GOD in them. In *prayer*, he really, humbly and delightfully converses with GOD. In *praise*, his soul exalts and magnifies the Almighty. He hears sermons that he may the better know GOD, and his duty, and love them; and that he may, by this means, cleanse his way, reform his life, and get strength for

both. He prepares for sacraments and attends them, that he may actually renew his covenant with GOD, and receive comfort and strength to keep it steadfastly : And he has a pleasure and delight in these duties, superior to any which he feels in the enjoyment of this earth.*

(4.) The heavenly-minded man has a turn for spiritualizing all the common occurrences and events of life. He is disposed to give a useful and edifying turn to every topic of conversation; and to profit even by the worst, or most common things that happen to himself, or to others around him. It would be endless to illustrate this remark.

(5.) The heavenly-minded man, having his conversation, his heart, his hopes, his treasure, and the object of his dearest love, and strongest desire in heaven, must needs have a peculiar and uncommon delight in those companions, and in that kind of conference and discourse, which are employed about spiritual and heavenly things. Companions and conversation of this kind, exactly hit his taste, as his mind is high and heavenly bent. This is so just and obvious a character of heavenly mindedness, that it needs no farther confirmation or illustration.

(6.) The heavenly-minded man may be

* Psal. xxvii. 4, 5. — lxiii. 1, 2. — lxv. 4, — lxxxiv. — xix. 7, — 19. — cxix. 73, — 127. — cxxii. 1, — 4.

said to live by the faith and hope of unseen and heavenly things. He considers this world but as a wilderness through which he is journeying towards his Father's house, and eternal inheritance. Hence, present things affect him but little, as present conveniences would a travelling wayfaring man. He had rather have them than want them ; but if he suffers a little in his journey, he cares not much for it. His Father, his Redeemer and almighty friend, and his brethren and sisters in Christ which have left this world, are in heaven before him ; his treasure is there ; his rest, reward, crown, and inheritance are there.—His heart therefore must be there also.—He is therefore *habitually, believingly, hopefully and joyfully* looking forward to his journey's end. And indeed, the more eagerly that the eye of his faith and hope is fixed upon the heavenly prize, *i. e.* the more heavenly-minded he is, the less will he regard or mind the things that are around him, or the cross accidents that happen to him on his journey thither. Hence it follows, that he walks by *faith*, not by *sight* ; looketh not on the things that are seen and temporal, but at the things which are unseen and eternal ;—setteth his affection on things above, and not on things below. His fears and cares, hopes and desires, sorrows and joys, are chiefly of the *spiritual* and *bea-*

venly kind, and but *little*, *seldom*, and *moderately* moved about this world, and the things of it, which pass away. On the contrary, earthly-mindedness, discovers itself by the following marks:—A loving and preferring the creature above GOD:—the body and its concerns above the soul and its interest;—earth above heaven;—the objects and enjoyments of sight and sense, above those of faith and hope. The earthly-minded man, prefers money before grace;—earthly honor above heavenly;—the favor of men before that of GOD;—a good living in this world, before the hopes of heavenly blessedness. He is little moved by the *works* or *providences* of GOD; little affected by *his word*;—little delighted with *his ordinances* or *people*; has no pleasurable relish for holiness itself, or the means of attaining it: But performs these, if he does perform them at all, in a *customary, formal, carnal, lifeless* manner, to stop the mouth of conscience; to please the world and promote worldly ends; or to be seen and praised of men.

ESSAY XXVI.

GOSPEL SINCERITY, or UPRIGHTNESS.

1. GOSPEL sincerity is expressed by two words:—The *first* signifies

“ a thing which will stand the test, if it is
 “ examined or judged of by the light of
 “ the sun, *eilikrinia*,” and is used by the
 Apostle,* when he commands the *Corin-
 thians* to keep the feast with the unleaven-
 ed bread of sincerity and truth ; or it may
 allude to the judgment passed on grain
 when it is winnowed, which will bear win-
 nowing, and being separated from the
 chaff, looks the better.—Sincerity is some-
 thing which will stand the test.—The other
 word is *aplotēs* which is commonly trans-
 lated *simplicity* ; which signifies, a *thing*
without folds, and intimates *an open* and
undisguised behavior, without *deceit, guile*,
 or *dissimulation*.—Thus we are command-
 ed to have our conversation in this world
 in *simplicity and godly sincerity* ; not with
worldly or knavish and deceitful wisdom.†
 And according to this sense of the word we
 are commanded to lay aside *all guile* and
hypocrisy.‡ And the man is pronounced
 blessed in whose spirit there is *no guile*.||
 And *Nathanael* is pronounced an Israelite
 indeed, in whom was *no guile* ;—that is, a
plain man, as *Jacob* is called.**

2. Gospel sincerity supposes a single aim
 and intention of pleasing GOD in the whole

* 2 Cor. v. 8.

† 2 Cor. i. 12.

‡ 1 Pet. ii. 1.

|| Psal. xxxii. 2.

** John i. 47. Gen. xxv. 27.

of our course. And although this intention may not be actually alive in our hearts, as the moving and producing cause of every single action; yet if we are *sincere*, it must be our *habitual, prevailing intention*; and wherever we have time to *doubt* or *deliberate* about the nature of any action, this must be our *actual intention* in it; and that nothing contrary to this intention prevails with us. This is included in these general precepts of christianity—"Whether ye eat
 "or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the
 "glory of GOD.—Whatever we do, we do
 "it unto the Lord, and not unto men.—
 "Servants be obedient to your masters
 "with fear and trembling, in singleness of
 "your heart, as unto Christ; not with eye
 "service, as men-pleasers, but as the ser-
 "vants of Christ; doing the will of GOD
 "from the heart; with good will doing
 "service, as to the Lord, and not to men,
 "knowing," &c.* The same is also meant by a *single eye*, and the contrary, namely, *insincerity* by the *double minded man*, who is *unstable in all his ways*.

3. Gospel sincerity, supposes an impartial enquiry into our duty, what it is;—a hearty desire and endeavor to know, in every instance, *what is the good and acceptable and holy will of the Lord*, and how we may so walk as to please GOD.† The up-

* Eph. vi. 5.—9. Col. iii. 22,—24.

† 1 Thes. iv. 1.

right man is anxious to know his master's will in every particular case, and is ever ready to say, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And what I know not, teach thou me."—He desires to have no *bias*, *prejudice*, or *prepossession* against the will of GOD, how cross soever it may be to his own will or former notions or prejudices. He desires to be excused from no part of his duty, how difficult or self-denying soever.—And as this is the *sincerity* of his *disposition*; so he gives all diligence, by prayer, enquiry, reading, and a close attendance upon ordinances, to know the whole of his Master's good pleasure, that he may prepare himself to do according to it. But insincere men, are careless about the knowledge of their Master's will; because they are prejudiced against the performance of it, and *hold the truth in unrighteousness*. *Nathanael's* conduct affords a fine illustration of this branch of sincerity; and our Saviour seems to fix the noblest character he gives him, on his impartial enquiry after truth.*

4. Gospel sincerity runs through the whole of a man's religious character and conduct, and supposes an entire and universal application to the practice of duty, so far as we know it, without any stated, allowed reserves to the contrary. The fin-

* John iii.

cere man, as his governing aim is to please and serve GOD, so he will be as careful of the exercise of every grace and virtue, in the frame and temper of the heart, as in the outward actions of the life.—He will be as careful and watchful over his *private* conduct, as his *public*;—as sorry for his *secret* sins, and the follies of his *heart*, as for his outward offences;—as devout and constant in the religion of the *family* and *closet*, as in that of the *church*;—as conscientious in shunning one sin as another, and in performing one duty as another. And indeed, there cannot be a more *clear* and *decisive trial* of our sincerity than this; namely, to examine and observe how we stand affected to those parts of morality and religion, to which none but GOD and our own consciences are privy. If we perform these as carefully and circumspectly, as we do the most outward and visible duties, which are seen and praised of men, then may we conclude on just grounds, that we have truth in the heart, and sincerity in the inward parts.

5. Sincerity supposes a conformity and agreement between the sentiments of a man's heart and his words and actions. A sincere man will not say that he believes a doctrine which he really does not believe, to please, or gain the good opinion of any man. He will not speak of exercises, feelings, or ex-

perience which he never had, in order to obtain any privilege :—He will not profess a sorrow for sin which he feels not, nor resolution of repentance and amendment which he never truly and solemnly made. The sincere man, either speaks not at all, in matters of religion, or else speaks sincerely what he thinks. He *canteth* not, he *dissembleth* not, he *lieth* not either *for*, or *to*, or *concerning* GOD, or the things of his soul.—St. *Peter* was flagrantly guilty of this kind of *insincerity*,* and so are all hypocrites.

6. The same thing will sincerity produce in all our conduct *towards men*. A sincere man will scorn to use *trick*, *artifice* and *dissimulation*, to gain his ends with his fellow-creatures; he will not pretend friendship or kindness where he has none; nor make promises which he intends not to perform; nor act an unfriendly part behind men's backs, after professions of respect and regard to their faces;—much less will he stoop to the baseness of making pretences of friendship, on purpose to impose on men, or use sly insinuations to draw things from them in the freedom of discourse, with the murderous design of divulging these very things afterwards to their disadvantage. This is the wicked cunning and craftiness of the old serpent, and not

* Gal. ii. 11,—14.

the *openness* and *sincerity* of a christian indeed, in whom there should be no guile.

7. We are obliged to this temper and conduct by numberless considerations: (1.) It is expressly required by the precepts of our religion.* (2.) We cannot expect acceptance with God, in any duty, without sincerity, Jam. ii. 10. Matth. xxiv. 51. Phil. i. 10. (3.) We cannot have peace of mind, or stand acquitted at the bar of our own consciences, if we are insincere in religion, 1 John iii. 19,—21. 2 Cor. i. 12. Gal. vi. 4. (4.) To be sincere in religion, would save the professors of it abundance of trouble which hypocrisy occasions them. The easiest and surest way of seeming to be religious, is to be so in reality; and it is the most difficult and disagreeable task in the world to be ever wearing a mask and false disguise. (5.) Insincerity is the very image of the *devil*, that *subtile, malicious, deceitful, guileful* old serpent, who transformeth himself into an angel of light.

8. It is greatly to be lamented, that this noble virtue, which indeed is one of the most distinguishing badges of true christianity, should yet be so little regarded, and so shamefully violated among professing christians, that under the warmest professions of friendship, and the most solemn obligations to it, there should be so little besides

* Josh. xxiv. 14. John vi. 24. Rom. xii. 8. Heb. x. 22,

trick and artifice, deceit and dissimulation, double-dealing, and undermining practised among christian brethren. A clear, but melancholy proof this, that we have only a name to live, while we are in the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity, and doing the works of our father the devil.

ESSAY XXVII.

CHRISTIAN ZEAL, and its OPPOSITES and COUNTERFEITS.

1. **Z**EAL seems properly to signify, a *heat, fervour and impetuosity of mind and action*; and is either *good or bad*, either a *virtue or a vice*, either *religious, or common and profane*, according to its objects, and the proportion it bears to their importance.

2. Even religious zeal is not so much a christian grace or virtue, as a qualification which should attend the exercise of every christian grace and virtue.

3. The scriptures give as many instances of a *bad* zeal as of a *good* one; we cannot therefore be too cautious about what objects our zeal is employed, and in what degree, lest, while we imagine we are pleasing and honoring God, we may in fact be dishonoring and offending him, and increasing our own guilt.

4. As christian zeal is, however, a very important and indispensable duty, and as we are expressly commanded to *be zealous*,* it may be right to enquire into the properties of a true christian zeal; to consider its specious and imposing counterfeits, to speak of the obligations we are under to be zealous, and of that temper which is contrary to it; and by doing this we shall exhaust the subject.

(1.) Even a religious zeal, is no farther good and commendable, than when it is on the side of truth and virtue. The *cause* therefore must be *good* about which our zeal is concerned, or it will have the most mischievous consequences. To be zealous, that is, to have a strong and ardent concern, for falsehood, and against truth; or for vice and against virtue, and to act vigorously in consequence of this zeal, is to do the very greatest mischief, in our power, and to act the *devil*, as much as our capacities and influence will admit. Such was the zeal of the Jews against Christ, his apostles, and the primitive christians. Such, particularly, was the zeal of *Saul*, afterwards *Paul*, when he *madly*, and with uncommon ardor and activity, persecuted the church of Christ.† The caution therefore of this

* Rev. iii. 19.

† Acts v. 17, 18. — xiii. 45. — xvii. 5. Rom. x. 2. Gal. i. 14. Phil. iii. 6.

same apostle, is extremely apposite and necessary; "It is good to be always zealously affected in a good thing."*

(2.) Ignorance of truth and duty, where there is a possibility and opportunity of coming to the knowledge of them, will not excuse in this matter, otherwise it would have excused St. *Paul* and most of the *Jews* in their misguided and mischievous zeal. Therefore, our zeal, especially our religious zeal, should always be preceded by a careful, serious enquiry into the truth, and accompanied with knowledge. The reason of this is plain; for, of all zeal, religious zeal where it is blind and misguided is the most furious and mischievous. It is increased by the importance of its object; and when it is blind and misguided, it rages against the cause and glory of God, and the highest concerns of men, which are truth and righteousness. We may see its dreadful effects in the primitive *Jewish* and *heathen* persecutions, and in the seas of Protestant blood spilt by the church of Rome. If the *Jews* had known Christ, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory; yet since they *might* have known him, their ignorance was no excuse for their zeal against him. It was their sin, that their zeal of GOD was not according to knowledge.†

* Gal. iv. 18.

† Rom. x. 2.

What things Saint *Paul* did against Christ, were ignorantly through unbelief; yea, he verily thought that he ought to have done them; yet was he not thereby justified in doing them.*

(3.) Right and good zeal, must be proportioned to the value and importance of the objects about which it is employed. As there is diversity in the importance even of these things which are of divine duty and obligation, so we should be most zealous about the most important things and duties of religion, and proportionably less zealous, about those things and duties which are of less importance. It is the way of hypocrites to be mighty zealous about trifles; about small matters, and ceremonial observances, while they are very lukewarm and indifferent, about the greater duties of *piety* and *morality*. They tithe *mint, anise and cummin*; while they neglect the weightier matters of the law, *mercy, judgment and righteousness*.† How preposterous and absurd is it to see a man break charity with his Christian brother, for the neglect of *modes, ceremonies, and human inventions*, while he would caress him, though a drunkard, an adulterer, or a profane swearer, if he observed these? Reason will teach us, that duties of the highest importance, should

* 1 Tim. i. 12, — 15.

† Matth. xxiii. 23, 24.

be the most ardently cared for, and the most diligently performed. We would deem him a fool, who would be more concerned about the security and welfare of his finger or toe, than of his heart or brain. Every thing appertaining to true religion merits our regard and observance; but the vitals of religion merit our warmest zeal. "GOD loveth mercy more than sacrifice, and righteousness more than all burnt offerings."

(4.) True zeal always takes its rise in the heart, and is founded on a *right temper* and *right affections* there. It is termed *fervency of spirit*.* Christian zeal is the sprightly vigor, and strenuous activity of every holy affection and disposition; and these springs set the active powers of the soul and body to work in the cause of God and goodness.—And here we may take notice of the *opposites* and *counterfeits* of true zeal, in this view of it;—such as, *first*, a *Laodicean, careless, indolent, lukewarm* temper of mind: The person is neither hot nor cold;—he will not wholly throw up a profession of religion; yet is he too indolent and unconcerned to act up to it with becoming earnestness and intenseness, spirit and resolution. He, as it were, *halts between two opinions*; his mind is in a state of *torpid equilibrium*, without heat

* Rom. xii. 13.

enough to espouse its interests and perform its duties, or coldness enough to abandon it and give it up. This is the sad case of millions in the christian church.* *Secondly*, there is a seeming counterfeit zeal for religion, where there is no warmth, of *affection*, a *blustering*, *noisy*, profession, spending itself either in religious discourse or controversy, or in uncharitable and censorious judgments and railings against the characters and professions of others, where there is really no true regard to religion at heart. This seems to have been the zeal or (hypocrisy) of the *scribes* and *pharisees*; and is well described by the prophet.† Or, *thirdly*, it is a dreadful counterfeit of true christian zeal, when men make a great shew and stir in religion, merely to deceive others, and to obtain *wicked* or *secular* ends, as was the case with *Jehu*, when he said; “Come see my zeal for the Lord.”‡

(5.) True christian zeal always begins at home; it first casts the beam out of our own eye; its indignation rises highest at our own faults; it is vigorously concerned for our own reformation, correction, improvement in knowledge and grace; perfection and final security and happiness. It is absurd to imagine that a man can have any right and true hatred of sin in others, while he

* Rev. iii. 14,—19.

† Ezek. xxxiii. 31. Psal. lxxviii. 36, 37. Isa. xxix. 13.

‡ 2 Kings x. 16.

has none against it in himself; or that a man should be anxiously concerned for another man's reformation, salvation and happiness, while he has no regard to his own.

(6.) True christian zeal is ever properly employed about others in the *second place*. Christians are zealous of good works, both in themselves and others.* We have instances of this kind, Acts xvii. 16. Rev. ii. 2. Charity should quicken our zeal both *against the sins* and for *the happiness* of others. David was grieved, and shed tears, when he beheld transgressors.—*Lot* was vexed by the filthy conversation of the wicked. Christ cast the money changers out of the court of the temple, and in this was fulfilled in him that scripture, "The zeal of thy house hath eaten me up." *Paul's* spirit was moved, at the sight of *Athenian* idolatry. True zeal will engage us to reprove the sins of others, in a proper place, time and manner.† True zeal against sin, will make us shun sinful companions, Psal. cii. 4.—It will also engage us to do all the good for the souls of others that we can, Eccles. ix. 10.

(7.) That we may shun irregularities in the exercises of our zeal towards others, we should observe the following cautions : 1. Let us take heed of a censorious, unchari-

* Tit. ii. 14.

† Ephes. v. 11. Tit. i. 10,—13. 2 Tim. iv. 2.

table spirit in our reproofs of others.—This is a zeal *unchristian* and *without knowledge*, and is never likely to do any good.

2. Let us beware of *passion* and *wrath* in our zeal to reclaim and reform transgressors.

Love to the person of the offender, and meekness should accompany our most zealous endeavors to reform him : For, in this case, as in others, *the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God*. 3. The instruments of christian zeal, are *scripture*, *reason* and *persuasion*. It is a wicked, anti-christian, unwarrantable zeal, to destroy men's bodies, or rob them of their interests, for the good of their souls. This is the zeal of Popish inquisitors. 4. Our zeal should be tempered with *prudence*. The

zeal of a private christian cannot, with prudence, be carried so far in the reformation

of abuses, as that of a *magistrate* or *public minister of religion*. Altho' every christi-

an should be zealous for the propagation of truth and goodness, yet the measure of his

zeal should correspond with his station.—

Besides, the exertions of our zeal against

sin should be regulated, by the character

of offenders, and the nature of their offences. *Public, bold and shameless* offenders

are to be *rebuked sharply*.* Of some

have compassion, making a difference :

And others save with fear, *pulling them*

* Tit. i.

out of the fire.† 5. Right zeal is exerted against all sin, both in ourselves and others.

(8.) True christian zeal is enforced upon us by many reasons and obligations: 1. The importance of religion deserves our zeal.—2. The difficulties that attend the right discharge of our christian duty require zeal, and render it necessary.—3. We can have no evidence of our own sincerity, without becoming fervor and earnestness in the duties of religion; for, considering the unspeakable importance of religion, if we are *truly* concerned about it at all, it must be *zealously*.—4. We shall never do much good to the souls of others, or much honor to our common christianity, without a proper degree of christian zeal.—5. We have the examples of the *prophets*, and of *Christ* and his *apostles*, and of all eminently good men, to countenance and encourage us in a zealous adherence to religion, and in the zealous practice of the duties of it.

ESSAY XXVIII.

PATIENCE *and the* CONTRARY VICES.

1. **P**ATIENCE is *twofold*. It either, (1.) respects the evil of life which we are actually feeling; or, (2.) some fu-

† Jude 22, 23.

ture good, which we have reason to expect, but which we do not as yet enjoy. The first is expressed in scripture by the word *upomone*, which signifies an *enduring of afflictions with constancy*. The second by the word *makrothumia*, a *length of mind*, which signifies a *patient waiting for a promised good*, and is opposed to *hastiness of spirit*.*

2. Patience does not consist in *insensibility*, nor suppose it. It supposes that we *feel* the whole weight of our troubles and afflictions, but bear them with a christian spirit and temper ; and implies the following things.

3. That we have the command and possession of our own souls and are not ruffled or discomposed, by the cross or painful accidents of life ; but that we are so much *our own man* as to see, and steadily to pursue and perform the duties which become us as *men*, and *christians*.

4. Patience will prevent us from making hasty judgments either concerning God or man ; either against ourselves or others. *Impatience* makes men fretful and discontented, and hurries them on in the heat of their spirits, to rash and wicked judgments both of God and man ; 'I said, in my haste, all men are liars,' and so Psal. lxxvii. 7, — 10.

* Heb. vi. 12. James. v. 10. Rom. ii. 4. — xi. 22. 2 Cor. vi. 6.

Patience will make us consider, that we may be mistaken both with regard to the *designs* and *intensions* of God and man, and with regard to the *justice* and *propriety* of our afflictions, and will save us from many rash, wicked and uncharitable thoughts, both of God and our neighbor.

5. Patience, will preserve us from using unlawful methods both of delivering ourselves from present afflictions and obtaining the things we desire,—if we are endued with christian patience we will rather *suffer* than *sin*: We will rather continue poor and miserable, than better our state by forbidden and unlawful means: We will wait God's time and will, in the way of duty and honest endeavors; being assured, that God will deliver us from trouble, and perform his promise to us in the very best and fittest time and manner, if we do indeed wait upon him and trust in him.

6. Christian patience will engage us to persevere in the way of duty, in the midst of all discouragement and opposition; because, it proceeds upon a supposition and firm unshaken belief, 'That whatever befalls us, is best and fittest for us upon the whole; that whatever we suffer, we not only suffer deservedly, but it is *proper* and *needful* that we should so suffer, and that whatever God hath promised, shall surely be performed in the fittest and properest

“time.” In a word, it proceeds upon a firm, convictive and practical belief of the truth, wisdom, goodness and power of GOD, and of the perfect equity, wisdom and goodness of all his providential dealings with his creatures, and that if we do but our part, GOD never can nor will fail in his. Nay, that even his delays in delivering us from affliction, or conferring upon us his promised blessings, are just and right, merciful and gracious.*

7. This grace is perfectly reasonable, and fit and becoming to be exercised by such creatures as we are, as will appear by the following reasons.

8. Impatience under afflictions, or in the delay of expected good, can be of no manner of service to us, but must do us a great deal of hurt. Our fretting and murmuring under afflictions, discompose us, and make their weight *double*. It shews a rebellious temper, and renders us unworthy of the relief which we desire; while, at the same time, it cannot procure us any relief, but must needs make our case worse.

9. We deserve no good thing at the hand of God, but a ; evil, even *eternal misery*; and therefore, if we *think right*, a living man has no right to complain, for the punishment of his sins; but it is his evident duty to bear the indignation of the

* Job vii. 9. Heb. xii. 1, &c.

Lord, because he hath sinned against him. If we had our deserts, we would be in hell; therefore, we should bear patiently every affliction, which is short of this.

10. Even where GOD hath made promises to deliver his people from afflictions, or to bestow upon them mercies, he hath not *ordinarily* limited himself to *any particular time*: but justly expects that we should refer the *time* and *manner* wholly to his own infinite justice, wisdom and goodness, and wait upon him believingly, confidently and resignedly for the event.

11. God's mercies and deliverances are so *full*, *complete* and *satisfying* in themselves; and the very smallest of them is so great an honor, when conferred by so great a Being, upon such worthless, undeserving and hell-deserving creatures as we are, that it becomes us to wait patiently for them, in the most diligent and self-denying means, all the days of our lives. What are we that we should *set a time* to the great GOD, and be fretful, peevish and impatient, if he does not hear our cries and gratify our desires, in sending us blessings and deliverances, which we have not the least claim to *of right*, and which we have *wholly forfeited* by our sins and provocations?

12. In a word, if we would consult our duty to GOD, and our own highest interest and happiness, it behoves us to *let patience*

have its perfect work, under every trial and affliction.

ESSAY XXIX.

MEEKNESS and the opposite VICES.

1. **T**HE scriptures teach us to consider meekness, as referring, in its exercises, both to GOD and man.

2. Meekness, as it is a right temper towards GOD, respects either his word or his providences.

3. As it respects his word or his revealed will, it consists in a humble, teachable submission to the authority of his word; that the soul bows to it and acquiesces in it, and sacrifices all its prejudices, carnal reasonings and preconceived opinions to its dictates. It implies the temper of young Samuel, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth." Or, that of Cornelius's household, "Behold, we are all here present before GOD, to hear what is commanded us of GOD." Thus we are commanded, to receive with meekness (with the eager, submissive, obedient temper of humble disciples, and with all readiness of mind) the ingrafted word, which is able to save our souls.* Thus Christ was anointed to preach

* James i. 21.

good tidings to the meek : And GOD dwells with them who are of a humble heart, and who tremble at his word ; and guides the meek in judgment.†

4. Meekness towards GOD, implies an *humble, complacential submission* to his *providential will*, in its *severest and most afflictive dispensations*. And this is submission or resignation to the will of GOD, in opposition to a fretful, murmuring, impatient spirit against his providence. The man who is thus meek towards GOD, is dumb and openeth not his mouth ; and is still, and submits quietly to the rod ; and humbles himself under the mighty hand of GOD, and accepts the punishment of his iniquities, and says with Ely, “It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good.”

5. Meekness, as it is a right temper of mind and spirit towards our neighbor, consists in a sweet and easy, courteous and obliging, peaceable and composed temper and behavior, and is opposed to a boisterous, unruly, morose, revengeful, and more especially to a surly and angry temper and conduct towards others.

6. The meek person is calm under provocations, and, having a command over his own spirit, is not hurried on to cursing, railing, reproachful language, or to hasty

† Psal. xxv. 9. Isa. lxi. 1.

resentment and revenge, which always drives people of furious, ungoverned passions, to sinful, and often to very unjust and injurious extremes. The meek man will never be angry without a cause, or above measure; will never take an affront where none is meant, nor resent a real affront above what it deserves. He is slow to wrath; not easily provoked; thinketh no evil; speaketh not unadvisedly with his lips; rendereth not railing for railing; but, by soft and reasonable answers, turneth away wrath, and overcometh evil with good. Anger resteth in the bosom of fools: But it is not so with the meek man; he letteth not the sun go down on his wrath. If his brother sin against him *seventy-seven* times in a day, and say, *I repent*, he forgiveth him, and easily maketh up any breach, upon proper acknowledgment and submission. *Peace* is his *element*, and wrath the aversion of his nature.

7. Meekness discovers itself, in a great cautiousness of giving offence to others. Proud, angry, wrathful and turbulent men, are not cautious of this: They are perpetually giving offence, and seem to delight and glory in it, as a sign of courage. But the gospel teacheth us to speak evil, (unnecessarily) of no man; not to be brawlers, but gentle, kind, tender-hearted, thus shew-

ing all meekness to all men.* The meek man is ever a civil, affable, courteous man; and a good heart teaches him that which is the grand precept in *politeness* and *true good breeding*; namely, to give no offence or uneasiness to any in company; but to endeavor to give pleasure and satisfaction to all, so far as that may be done with a good conscience.

8. Meekness will shew itself in a modest and becoming deportment in every different rank, station and relation of life. It will make *servants, children*, and all *inferiors* contented and pleased with their low and inferior stations; the poor with their poverty, and the afflicted with their afflictions. And it will make superiors humble in their exalted stations, affable, and courteous, just and merciful, mild and gentle to those that are under them, in inferior states.

9. Above all, a meek temper will shew itself in things that relate to religion. Surely the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of GOD. We are to contend indeed earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints, and not to deny or dissemble what we take to be the truth of the gospel, even at the risque of life itself: But to manage religious disputes and controversies with angry contention and a persecuting spirit, is to defend and maintain truth in a

* Tit. iii. 2.

manner quite opposite to the temper and spirit of the gospel, and which is never like to make profelytes. It is to offer a holy sacrifice with unhallowed fire,—and, like *Uzzah*, to pollute the ark of GOD, by a *wrong touch*: Therefore, we are commanded, “In meekness to instruct those who oppose themselves.* To be ready to give an answer to every man that asketh us a reason of the hope that is in us, with meekness and fear.”† And even *offending brethren* are to be treated, and if possible recovered from the snares of the *devil*, “In the spirit of meekness.‡ Nay, the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, (or meek) full of mercy and good works;”—and a wise and knowing man in religion, is to rule his tongue and angry passions, and to shew, out of a good conversation, his works, with *meekness of wisdom*.|| Indeed, the very genius of the gospel is *meekness*.—It is the ministry of reconciliation with GOD and man.—It proclaims *peace upon earth*, as well as *good will towards men*.

10. We cannot be christians without this temper; without all *lowliness* and *meekness*: For, this is the very temper and spirit of Christ, and he has commanded us

* 2 Tim. ii. 25.

† 1 Pet. iii. 15.

‡ Gal. vi. 1.

|| Jam. iii. 13, &c.

to take his yoke upon us and learn of him ; for, says he, "I am meek and low of heart." And this *temper* he eminently expressed through the whole of his own life.

11. Meekness is one of the fruits of the regenerating, sanctifying spirit, without which we are sure, none will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Indeed, the most of these fruits, as enumerated by St. *Paul*, are branches of meekness. "Meekness, love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness ;"—and the greatest number of the works of the flesh, are directly the opposites of meekness ; such as, "hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife and envyings."

12. Meekness is a grace exceedingly ornamental to the christian character. We are commanded to be clothed with humility (which is a sister grace to meekness) "and to put on the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of GOD, of great price."* It is said also, "that he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city."† The meek also are pronounced *blessed*, by our Saviour, and have a promise that they shall *inherit the earth*.‡

* 1 Pet. iii. 4.

† Prov. xvi. 32.

‡ Matth. v. 5.

13. The meek man has the only chance of going *easily, quietly* and *happily* through the world. Nothing that happens will much rife or disturb him, and his temper will render him beloved and admired by all.

14. Let us not mistake an *easy, indolent, insensible, cowardly* natural temper for *christian meekness*. It is a grace of GOD's holy Spirit; and the true christian is meek, not for want of true courage and sensibility of injuries received, but in obedience to the laws of GOD, and in conformity to the doctrines and example of his Saviour.

15. If we would obtain this grace we must pray and strive to obtain it with *all diligence* and much *self-denial*: For, it is directly against the grain of our corrupt and sinful nature, and the prevailing maxims of the world. Indeed, no man will ever be endued with true christian meekness, till he has been renewed by the holy Spirit, and has learned of Christ to be meek and lowly of heart.

ESSAY XXX.

CHARITY, and the opposite VICES.

1. CHARITY is but another word for *love*; and when it is used as a term in divinity, in its largest and most extensive

sense, it signifies the whole of our duty to GOD and man, both in its principle and proper fruits and effects. In a word, charity is the fulfilling of the whole law, and includes the two great commandments laid down by our Saviour as the sum and substance of the law and the prophets. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, &c. and thy neighbor as thy self." Charity, therefore, in this largest sense, implies a right temper of mind, both to GOD and our *neighbor*, and all its genuine fruits and effects, and therefore, is the whole of true religion and morality.

2. This grace or virtue, as it respects GOD, (1.) presupposes a right knowledge of GOD; that we know him, or have worthy and just conceptions of him in his adorable and amiable perfections (for there is not a more certain maxim, than that we can have no love for an unknown object;) and this knowledge, though it may be obtained in part, and in some degree, from his works and providences, yet it is most perfectly obtained from his revealed word, illustrated and set home upon the soul by the influences of his Spirit. (2.) It implies that we love him *supremely*, and above all other beings; for if we do not love him *thus*, we do not love him as GOD; or the affection does not correspond with the ob-

ject of it. (3.) It implies that we are cheerfully and cordially devoted to his service and obedience : " For this is the love of " GOD, that we keep his commandments."

3. The vices opposite to this branch of charity—are, (1.) A wilful and careless ignorance of GOD ; a neglecting the means of knowing him and acquainting ourselves with him, without which it is impossible we should love him as we ought. (2.) An excessive *self-love*, or love of any creature, or creature enjoyment, by which the supreme love and affection of the soul is stolen away from GOD, and placed on the creature ; which is *spiritual idolatry*. (3.) All sin and vice is a violation of this branch of charity ; but more especially those sins, which strike most directly at the *glory of GOD*, such as *blasphemy*, *profane swearing*, *atheistical* thoughts and speeches, speaking irreverently and slighting of GOD, his works, word, ordinances, laws, and people. Indeed, the natural mind is enmity against GOD, and none but such as are born of him, can truly love him.

4. The second grand branch of charity, and as essential as the former, is *love to our neighbor*. And this may be divided into two branches, *humanity* and *christian charity*.

5. Every man, in scripture account, is *our neighbor*, be of what *nation*, or *religion*

he will, and we owe *love* or *charity* to every man as such ; as our fellow creatures ; a partaker with us in the same common nature ; as sprung from the same original stock, a creature of the same GOD, an inhabitant with us of the same world ; subject to the same feelings, passions, appetites, wants, necessities, miseries with ourselves, and bound with us to the same eternal world. From which relations naturally flow the duties of justice, sympathy, mercy, compassion, all springing from the root of charity or love to our neighbor. Hence we are to *owe no man any thing but love* ; and *this love* is the *fulfilling of the whole law*, as far as it respects our neighbor ; because it will naturally and powerfully dispose us to treat our neighbor in all respects *as we ought*, wherever it truly takes place, and prevails in the heart.

6. Contrary to this branch of *charity* or *humanity*, is all injustice, evil-speaking, evil-thinking, or rash and censorious judging of our neighbor ; all narrow, national prejudices against men ; all local, contracted affections which shut out a party of mankind from our humanity, on account of their being of a different nation or religion from ourselves ; all envy, malice, and cruelty towards our fellow-creatures, and all partiality in the administration of justice.

7. Christian *charity* or *love*, properly so called, consists in a peculiar affection for our fellow christians, under the notion of their being *our brethren*; disciples of the same LORD and Master; spiritual children of the same GOD by adoption and regeneration; heirs of the same precious hope, and incorruptible inheritance; fellow pilgrims in the same strange country, and fellow travellers together to the same land of promise. This is still an advance upon humanity, and unites christians together in the most peculiar bonds; so that whatever is a violation of the laws and bonds of common *humanity*, is much more so of the laws of *christian charity*. Indeed, charity, or christian love, is the peculiar genius of christianity, and is that grace which Christ has honored, by making it the peculiar and distinctive badge of his disciples. "By this," says Christ, shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if you have love one for another." Nor is the exercise of any grace so warmly urged upon christians, as this.

8. A peculiar fruit of charity is *alms-giving*, or relieving the necessities of the poor, the *needy*, the *miserable* and the *oppressed*; and indeed, this is what commonly passes in the world by the name of *charity*, though very unjustly: For, the apostle assures us, that a man may *give even all his*

goods to feed the poor, and yet have no charity. An alms, if it proceeds not from *charity*, that is, from a true christian love to GOD and our neighbor, and from a principle of dutiful obedience to GOD, is no grace at all.

9. We have an excellent character and description of charity given, 1 Cor. xiii. 4, &c. "Charity suffereth long and is kind; "charity envieth not; charity vaunteth "not itself, is not puffed up, doth not be- "have itself unseemly; seeketh not her "own; is not easily provoked; thinketh "no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but "rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things; "believeth all things; hopeth all things; "endureth all things; Charity never fail- "eth. And now abideth faith, hope and "charity, these three; but the greatest of "these is charity."

ESSAY XXXI.

CONTENTMENT and the opposite VICES.

1. **C**ONTENTMENT is a grace which respects only our *outward condition in this world*, and not our spiritual condition here, or our lot and appointment in the world to come; and it consists in such a moderate value for, and attachment to the things and enjoyments of the body and

of this mortal life, that whether we have or want them; whether we have little or much of them, we are so well satisfied, and so little disturbed, that we are thankful to God for what we have, and are at *leisure* to enjoy both God and *ourselves*. In short, it consists in such a submission to God, and satisfaction with the allotments of his providence, with regard to our worldly circumstances, that we may be able to say with the apostle, "I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be contented; both to be full and to be hungry: both to abound, and be abased and suffer need."*

2. Contentment cannot reach to a man's spiritual condition or future state; for, although a sinner may have reason to thank God that he is out of *hell*; yet, it would ill become him to say, 'Whatever state my soul is in, whether in a state of grace or sin, converted or unconverted, I am therewith contented.' The design of God's word is, that sinners should have no peace or contentment in their sinful and perishing condition, and that they should never rest contented, till their peace is made with GOD.

3. Nor would it become a gracious man to be contented with low attainments, in grace and holiness, and an imperfect measure of conformity to GOD. Saints should

* Philip. iv. 11, 12.

be restless in their endeavors to *perfect holiness in the fear of God*; and forgetting things behind, to reach forward, and press on to the mark for the prize of their high calling. Phil. iii. 13, 14, and many other scriptures.

4. Nor is it at all to be supposed that any human creature *could*, or *should* be contented to be damned, and thrust out for ever from the beatific presence of God. All sinners, indeed, ought to acknowledge damnation their just portion, and approve the law and sentence which condemns them :* But it is against the *law of self-preservation*; yea, against our duty to GOD, to consent to be damned, or to be contented with this allotment. That strong expression, therefore, of St. Paul, Rom. ix. 3, and that of Moses, Exod. xxxii. 32, must have some other meaning.

5. Nor ought we to be *so contented* with our condition and circumstances in this life, as to be willing to take up our lot, portion and everlasting abode here. Christian contentment is consistent with the most earnest wishes and desires to be in a better country, even an heavenly; to be *absent from the body*, and the things and enjoyments of it, and *present with the Lord*; and only supposes, that as wise and prudent travelers, we are contented with such lodgings.

* Psal. li. 4. Rom. iii. 4.

and fare as we meet with in our journey to our Father's house, and our heavenly inheritance.

6. Nor does contentment, even with our worldly circumstances, imply an insensibility of our difficulties and afflictions, or forbid lawful desires and endeavors to get rid of them by bettering our condition. Such desires are the foundation of diligence, industry, and the use of means, and therefore cannot be displeasing to God. But, contentment supposes, that if we are disappointed in the use of means, we acquiesce and are satisfied, without murmuring, convinced that such is the will of heaven.

7. Contentment is opposed to *covetousness*, and *worldly-mindedness*, and supposes that our desires of the good things of this world are low, modest and christian; that we seek not eagerly great things for ourselves, but bound our wishes and views to a moderate competency; resolving, that having food and raiment we will be therewith contented; seeing that a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesses.*

8. Immoderate worldly cares and anxieties about what *may* happen to us in time to come, are inconsistent with christian contentment, as they render men uneasy for the present, unfit them for the duties of

* Luke xii. 15. Gen. xxviii. 20. Heb. xiii. 15.

religion, and speak a distrust of the providential goodness of GOD.* Besides, these cares and anxieties, although they destroy our peace, yet they cannot better our circumstances; for, *taking thought*, cannot add one cubit to our stature, or alter the course or allotments of divine providence.

9. All murmurings and repinings against the providence of GOD, as though GOD had dealt more severely with us than he ought or might have done, are inconsistent with christian contentment. To remedy this, we should consider GOD's universal providence, and the equity and perfect rectitude of his ways, 1 Sam. iii. 18.

10. Envy against others, who are in more prosperous and honorable circumstances than we, is inconsistent with christian contentment. There can be no contentment in the envious breast. Why should my eye be evil against my neighbor, because GOD is good to him? If my neighbor is a wicked man, his prosperity will destroy him: If a good man, why should I envy his prosperity, and not rather rejoice in it; seeing GOD made him prosperous for wise and good purposes? Indeed, my envying my neighbor his prosperity or happiness, is a plain and convincing proof, that I myself do not deserve these blessings at the hand of GOD; and that if I had them, I would make a very bad use of them.

* 1st Cor. xiii. 31. Math. vi. 34. Phil. iv. 6.

11. A truly contented man, however he may wish his condition better, yet never will use *unlawful means* to better it. This is to make haste the wrong way, to be rich, easy or happy; and shews great discontent. The danger of this is well painted, in one instance of it, 1 Tim. vi. 8,—10. See a good advice also against this kind of discontent, Luke iii. 14.

12. Contentment will engage us to make the best of our condition whatever it be. The contented man will survey his remaining comforts with gratitude to GOD, and comfort himself by considering how few and tolerable his distresses and misfortunes are, compared with those of many others. He will also endeavor to extract some spiritual advantage out of every affliction.

To engage us to contentment with our present lots and conditions, let us consider, (1.) That they are appointed by a GOD of infinite justice, wisdom and mercy. (2.) That let them be as bad as they will, we deserve still worse. (3.) That it is generally *our own fault*, that they are not better. (4.) That if we are indeed God's children, all will work together for good to us; and that our wants and afflictions are ordered *in mercy*, and because *need so is*: And if we are not GOD's children, we are punished *less*, much less than our iniquities deserve. (5.) That however *grievous* or

hard and uncomfortable our lots are, our wants and miseries cannot be of long continuance, but must soon be terminated by death. (6.) That the best of men, even the *Son of God* himself, have been in worse present circumstances than we are; and yet were perfectly contented; from whose examples we should learn this grace.

ESSAY XXXII.

CHASTITY and the contrary VICES.

1. **G**OD hath implanted in the sexes such appetites and affections towards each other as are necessary for the propagation of our kind, and without which, probably the first command, "Multiply and replenish the earth," would not have been readily obeyed. And it is here worth observing, as a proof of the divine wisdom and goodness, that a natural pleasure is annexed to those actions by which our kind is propagated, and life supported and sustained.

2. Chastity consists in the regulation of these appetites and desires between the sexes.

3. As God hath implanted no natural appetites in his creatures, for which he hath not provided lawful gratifications; so

the appetites between the sexes, may be gratified in a lawful manner. Wherefore, chastity consists not in *eradicating* these natural appetites, but in *regulating* them; restraining them within the bounds of moderation, and directing them to right objects. Hence appears the unreasonableness of *celibacy*, and a *monastic life*.

4. Although brutes, generally speaking, are remarkably moderate in the gratification of these appetites, yet they cannot be called *chaste*, having no conscience, and being under no moral or divine law. *Chastity* therefore is a *human* and *christian* virtue, arising from reason, reflection, and submission to the authority of a divine law.

5. Reason and *reflection* will quickly convince us that the loose and unbounded gratification of the appetites between the sexes, would be productive of the greatest mischiefs in human society; and therefore *marriage*, (the only remedy against this mischief) has been held sacred and venerable among almost all nations, who have had little else than the dictates of natural reason for their guide. Indeed, other gratifications of these appetites have been tolerated among some of them. And the more brutish these nations have been, the more unbounded and unrestrained have they been in the gratifications of these appetites, (witness the ancient Britons.)

6. The christian revelation has limited the gratification of these appetites to *one woman* and *one man*, in a state of marriage, during the life of either of the parties ; and has strictly, and upon the severest penalties, forbid the gratification of them in any other way : The reasons of which limitation and prohibition, are very wise, and sufficiently obvious : Hence we may learn what is *unchastity*, in *deed*, *word* and *thought*.

7. Unchastity in *deed*, is when single and unmarried persons do at all actually gratify these appetites ; or when married persons at all actually gratify them, with any other persons than their own husbands or wives ; and is distinguished into sins of *fornication*, *adultery*, *incest*, *polygamy*, *sodomy*, and *self-pollution*.

8. Unchastity in thought or desire, is when one of either sex, looketh upon one of the contrary sex, which is a forbidden object, so as to lust after them, or desire criminal converse with them. And how much more criminally unchaste must it be, so to inflame the heart with an absent, forbidden object, as to act over the guilty scene in imagination ?

9. Unchastity in word, is when we use such filthy obscene language, as has a tendency to excite unchaste thoughts and desires, either in ourselves, or others. In order to maintain and preserve our chastity,

the following things seem necessary and useful :—(1.) To pray for, and endeavor after *true conversion*, or a *new, clean, and pure* heart ; for while we have a corrupt nature, our passions and appetites will ever be inordinate and ungovernable.—(2.) To shun all unnecessary intimacy and familiarity with forbidden objects of the different sex, by which we may insensibly contract unlawful desires, which may in time lead to criminal actions ; or, where a friendship is cultivated between the sexes, to improve it to the promoting of purity and virtue.—(3.) To choose and consort with such companions of our own sex, as are most chaste and modest in their language and deportment ; and on the contrary, to shun all lewd, immodest, profligate companions, who will soon vitiate our taste, and corrupt our manners.—(4.) To be much in reading the scriptures, and such other books, as tend to purify the mind, and inspire chaste and holy thoughts ; and cautiously to shun the perusal of loose plays, songs, romances, and such trash as corrupt and debauch the mind.—(5.) Often to examine our own hearts, and meditate on the extreme evil and danger of unchastity ; how unlike it renders us to the pure and holy God ; how unfit for his enjoyment, and how obnoxious to his vengeance ; that burning lusts, are fuel to kindle unquenchable flames, in the

place of torment.—(6.) Fasting and prayer, have been found excellent and effectual remedies for unchastity; and indeed, all the instrumental duties of religion should be used in this view.—(7.) Chastity agrees well with diligence and sobriety, and often dwells under the same roof with them.—(8.) Marriage is to many, the only remedy for unchastity; and it is a lawful and honorable one.—(9.) But, in short, without a new and divine nature, and grace in exercise, nothing will effectually secure either married or single from *unchastity*, either in *thought, word, or action*.

ESSAY XXXIII.

HUMILITY, and the opposite VICES.

1. **H**UMILITY consists in a right judgment of ourselves, compared with other beings; and is opposed to the vices of *pride, arrogance, self-righteousness, self-conceit, vanity, and boasting and glorying* in one's self, with a contempt of others.

2. Humility, like all the other christian graces, must be seated in the mind, and thence display and manifest itself in our words and outward deportment; and therefore the apostle exhorts christians to “put on
“*humbleness of mind.*”

3. Humility does not consist in making a wrong judgment of ourselves or others, or in thinking less or worse of ourselves than we deserve; but in making a right and just judgment of ourselves and others on comparison; and if we do so, we shall have little reason for pride, arrogance or self-conceit. Nor,

4. Does humility consist (as many have supposed) in mean clothes, dejected looks, and a complaisant cringing behavior to our fellow creatures: All these may consist with the most insufferable pride and ambition, and are often only cloaks to conceal it. Yet the world makes humility to consist wholly in these things, and will not allow a man to have any pride, who is negligent or slovenly in his dress, or affable in conversation.

5. The humble soul sees that he is *nothing* before GOD, or in comparison with him; that he is but a creature of a day, sprung from the dust, whose breath is in his nostrils, wholly depending on GOD for his soul, its faculties, his body and its senses; for every moment of his existence, every support and comfort of the present life, and every hope of future life; and therefore, he *walks exceeding humbly with his GOD*.

6. The humble soul sees that it is not only a *dependent* creature, but a *sinful, guilty, helpless, perishing, lost, miserable* creature, who has destroyed itself; who deserves hell, and no kind of mercy or favor

from GOD at all ; Therefore, he is content-
ed in all states without murmuring ; bears
afflictions with patience ; is thankful for
every, even the smallest favor ; rejoices in
the glad tidings of a Saviour and salvation ;
gladly disclaims and renounces his own
righteousness and merit, and joyfully em-
braces and pleads the righteousness and
merit of Christ ; comes to GOD poor and
empty, wretched and miserable, humble
and penitent, and falls down before the
throne of his mercy, willing to accept the
free salvation with the utmost gratitude, on
GOD's own terms ; on *any terms*.

7. The humble soul, knowing its own
natural weakness, blindness, ignorance and
fallibility ; how prone it is to errors, mis-
takes and prejudices ; readily renounces
and disclaims its own weak, corrupt, falli-
ble judgment in religious matters ; submits
its reason and understanding wholly to the
dictates of GOD's word and the *guidance of
his Spirit*, and is willing humbly and glad-
ly to learn from GOD and his *blessed Son*,
the truths and duties of religion. He is
not wise in his own conceit, or wise above
what is written, but wholly submits his un-
derstanding to revealed truth.

8. The humble soul thinks meanly of
its own knowledge and goodness, compared
with that of other men of nobler powers,
and higher attainments and advantages ;
esteeming others better than himself, and

in honor preferring them. He is so far from *envying* such, that he honors and respects them as better and more useful than himself; thanks GOD for his grace in them and his gifts to them; is ready to learn from and imitate them; speaks honorably and respectfully of them to others, and thereby endeavors to promote their usefulness in the world: Nay, he is not angry or offended, nor is his pride piqued, if they are honored more than him, and at his own expence. To bear this patiently, shews true humbleness of mind.

9. The humble soul, sensible, that all its knowledge and goodness is *borrowed* and *derived*; is the fruit of GOD's gifts and grace, and of the opportunities and advantages which he has conferred upon it; and how very limited and imperfect its knowledge is at the best; how very little it knows of what may be known, and how imperfect its knowledge is of the things which it knows, how many degrees of grace and goodness there are between it and the perfection of holiness of which our nature is capable: The humble soul, I say, knowing and being convinced of all this, can never despise those who have less knowledge and goodness than himself; because, he hath nothing which he hath not received, and it is GOD who hath made him to differ, and he is still but a poor, imperfect creature, full of ignorance and corruption. This there-

fore keeps him from *spiritual pride* ; from *self-righteousness* and *self-conceit* ; from being puffed up, and from glorying in a state which is so very far short of perfection. He is humble, and pities the infirmities of others.

10. Pride was the first sin of men and angels, and is still the predominant vice of sinners, and the last sin which is totally subdued and rooted out of the human heart by renewing grace.

11. Pride *towards GOD*, shews itself by the following symptoms. Men who will believe their own vain imaginations, sooner than GOD's word ; who set up their darkened reason, above the word of GOD, and their own corrupt wills, above the will and law of GOD ; who oppose GOD, and murmur against him, and will not accept of his Son and his righteousness, but believe they have righteousness and merit enough for their justification, are excessively proud : And this is the most hellish and provoking of all pride ; yet, it is the pride of every unconverted sinner.

12. Pride *towards men*, shews itself in undervaluing and despising others, and preferring ourselves before them ; in contradicting and opposing others upon all occasions ; in looking down upon others as beneath our notice, and undervaluing all their good qualities and accomplishments ; in speaking much of ourselves, praising ourselves, and boasting and glorying in our actions and dispositions.

13. Gaiety and fondness of dress, is a kind of *childish, womanish* vanity, which hardly deserves the name of *pride*. It is a kind of childish folly which deserves to be laughed at, and which no sinner of good common sense was ever guilty of. What? Proud of that which covers our nakedness and shame!

14. The *devil* affords the highest example of pride; and the blessed Jesus of humility.

15. Pride is the most *shameful* and *absurd* vice of a man; and humility the most *amiable and ornamental* virtue of a christian. †

ESSAY XXXIV.

SOBRIETY, and the contrary VICES.

1. SOBRIETY is a very extensive virtue, which is not only opposed to *drunkenness* and *intemperance* (as it is commonly understood); but to all *levity of mind* and *irregularity of the passions, appetites and affections*.—Indeed, to be *sober*, is to perform the third part of our christian duty.

“We must deny all ungodliness and every worldly lust, and live godly, righteously, and soberly in this world.”*

2. There is an intoxication or drunkenness of the mind, as well as of the body; and the *scripture* or *gospel sobriety* is particularly, if not chiefly opposed to this vice. All temperate and abstemious men, are not

† Psal. xxxviii. 6. Matth. v. 4.—xviii. 4. Isa. lviii. 15. Luke xviii. 9,—13. 1 Pet. v. 5. James iv. 6.

* Tit. ii. 12.

sober men. *Young women and deacons' wives* are commanded to be sober; † and it would be indecent to imagine, that this was a caution against intemperance in drinking. Young men are exhorted to be sober-minded; ‡ which shews that this virtue relates to the government of the mind, as well as to that of the bodily appetites.—Sobriety is also opposed to *gaiety* and *vanity in dress* in women, and pertness or immodesty of behavior: “In like manner also, that women
“adorn themselves in modest apparel, with
“shamefacedness and sobriety; not with
“broidered hair, or gold, or pearls, or costly array; but with good works.” ||—It is also opposed to *pride* and *self-conceit*:**
“Let no man think of himself more highly
“than he ought; but soberly, according as
“GOD hath dealt to every man the measure
“of faith.”

3. Sobriety, therefore, as it is a *mental virtue*, seems to signify *gravity* and *decorum* of thought and behavior; and consists in a due and prudent regulation of the passions, appetites, affections and actions, and is opposed to *levity*, *fickleness* and *inconstancy of mind*; to *pride*, *self-conceit*, and extravagant *passions* and *affections* of all sorts.—So that a sober man, is one who is discreet, humble, prudent, composed, patient, meek, grave and exemplary in all manner of life and conversation.

† Tit. ii. 4. 1 Tim. iii. 11.

‡ Tim. ii. 9.

** Rom. xii. 3.

|| Tit. i. 6.

4. Sobriety is also often particularly opposed to intemperance in drinking.*

5. Drunkenness which is the opposite to sobriety in this sense of it, is, in itself, *a great evil*, and productive of many others.† (1.) It is expressly and repeatedly forbidden in the gospel, under the penalty of forfeiting the favor of GOD and eternal life, 1 Cor. vi. 10. Gal. v. 21. Matth. xxiv. 48,—51. (2.) Christ and his apostles, have warned christians against it, in a very singular, and most urgent manner; and no wonder, seeing it is in itself so beastly a vice, and attended with so many hurtful consequences with regard to men's *bodies, souls*, reputation and worldly interests. (3.) It is a vice peculiarly heathen.‡ (4.) It wholly unmans us;—renders us stupid and ridiculous, just objects of ridicule and contempt, even to children, servants and idiots.|| (5.) It incapacitates us for all the duties we owe to GOD, our families, our neighbors, and ourselves; and puts us in the way of doing the most wicked and hurtful actions. (6.) It justly renders us unworthy of all trust and confidence from others. (7.) It lays us open an easy prey to all knavish and designing men; lays the foundation of many chronical and acute diseases, and generally brings its votaries to poverty, contempt and an unpitied and premature death.

* 1 Thes. i. 6,—8. 1 Pet. iv. 7. 1 Tim. iii. 2. Tit. i. 8.

—ii. 2,—12. Acts xxvi. 25. † Prov. xxiii. 29, 30, 33.

‡ Rom. xiii. 12, 13, 14. 1 Thes. v. 8.

|| Prov. xxix. 1. Hos. iv. 11.

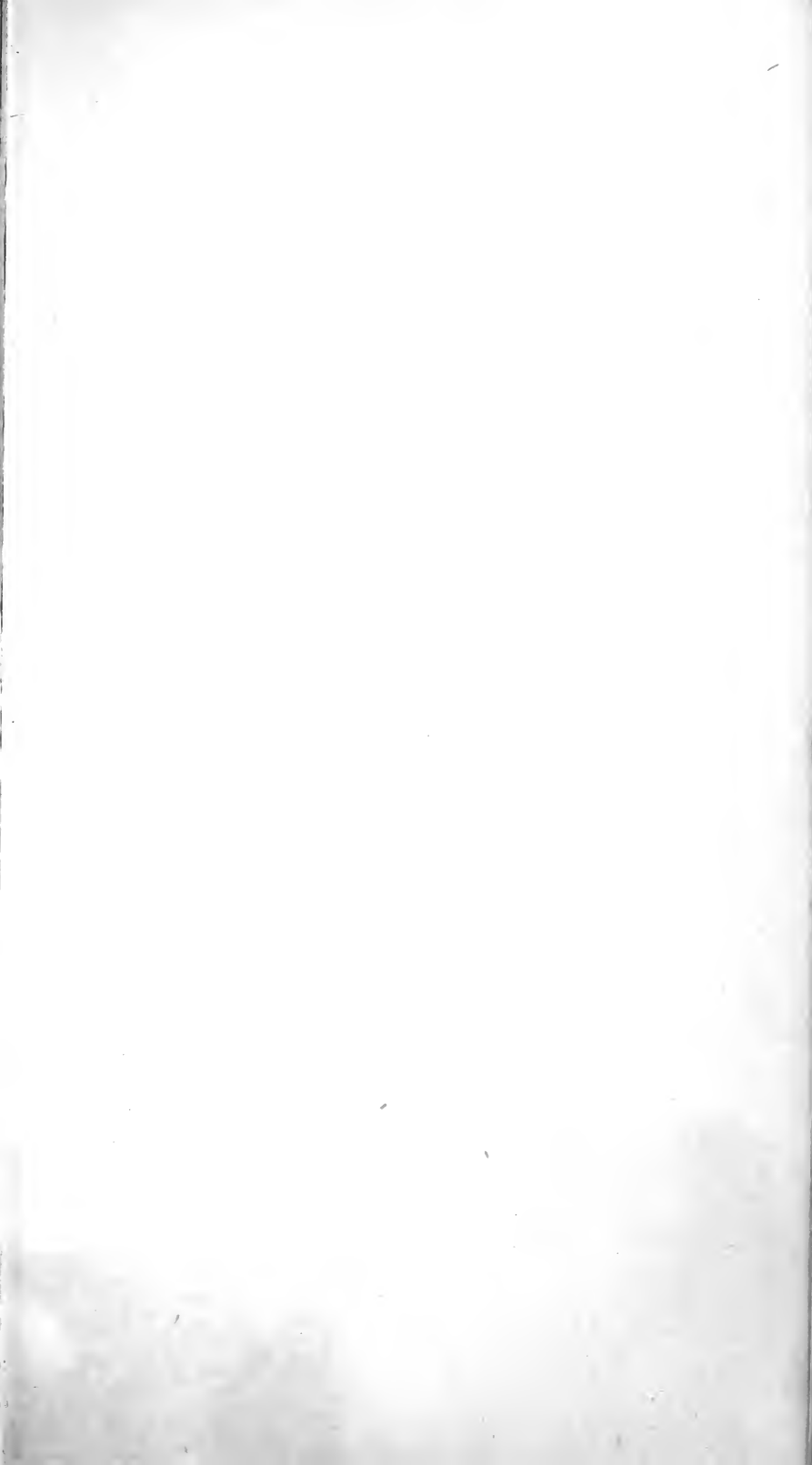
6. In order that we may be preserved from this most disgraceful and most destructive of all vices, the following maxims and cautions may be found serviceable.—(1.) Shun the company of such as are addicted to this swinish vice.* Tarry not long among those who are in the way to excess, how sober soever their general character may be, lest you should be induced to run to the *same excess of riot*, and so contract a vicious habit.—(3.) Take care never to exceed that quantity of wine or strong liquor, which you find by experience to be a proper and moderate refreshment. The boundary of temperance is so very narrow, that we may easily exceed it; which, if we do, we lose the command of ourselves, and may quickly be hurried to the greatest length of excess. (4.) Endeavor never to make strong liquor necessary to your refreshment. There is much wisdom in laying restraints on the appetites, at times, even in the use of innocent enjoyments. These wholesome restraints strengthen self-power and self-government. (5.) Shun habitual idleness, which is commonly the parent of drunkenness, gaming and most other pernicious vices. (6.) Frequently consider the *shame*, the *folly* and the *horrid guilt*, and danger of drunkenness.† —(7.) Pray daily to GOD for a new heart, cleansed from the love of sin, and breathing after universal purity and perfection.‡

* Prov. xiii. 20.—xxiv. 20, 21.—iv 14, 15. Heb. ii. 15.

† Deut. xxix. 19, 20. ‡ Rom. xiii. 12,—14.







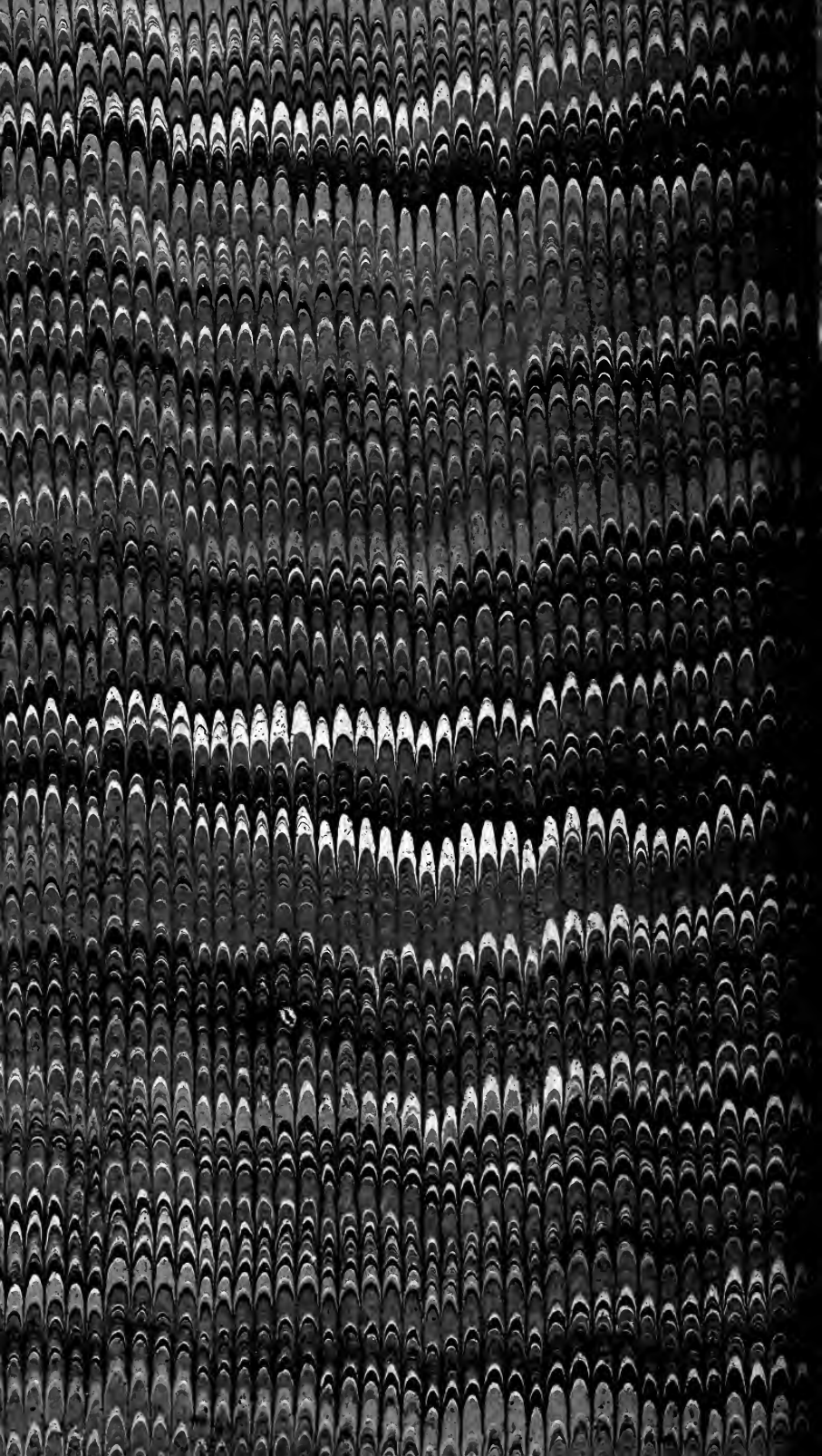
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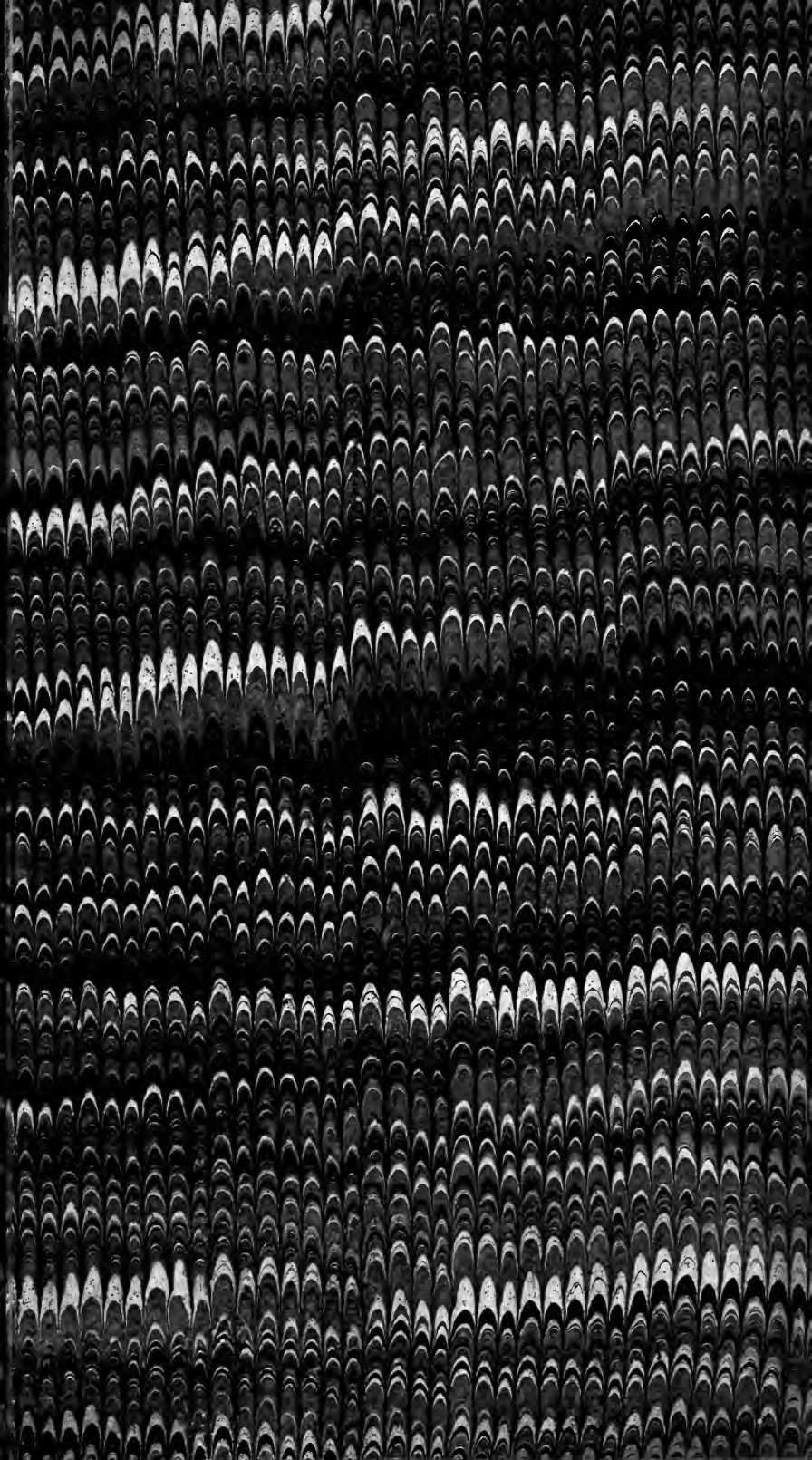
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